

hear/here, gathering the commonplace:  
towards a new understanding of affect and embodied encounter  
through constructing non-narrative sound installation

Dr ana gabrielle rutter

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<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/shared/13b5cad475f9a38133ff4f836bb20a29>

Foreword:

I write this in acknowledgement of everyone who has sustained me throughout my PhD journey, provided opportunities along the way, and supported the completion of this thesis and exhibition. I am sorry I cannot mention you all here.

I want to firstly extend my deep gratitude to Dr Lisa Metherell, my Director of Studies, who stayed with 'the trouble' and guided me to a successful completion and Dr Simon Hall for the generous encouragement, sharing of knowledge and points of helping me believe this might be possible. To my examiners, Dr Becky Shaw and Dr Peter Batchelor and the committee chair, for such an interesting day and insightful comments which will give me much to consider as I travel forward. I additionally would like to recognise that this endeavour would never have begun without my initial team, the inspirational Dr Jo Longhurst, to whom I am eternally grateful for telling me I had an interesting voice and things to say, and David Cheeseman for his enthusiasm and belief in my work.

I am grateful to Birmingham City University for providing the resources and time needed for this research, and particularly Gabe Stewart for his part in that. Additionally, my thanks to Dr Sian Vaughan for her advice and encouragement, and to Zakia Shaikh, Karin Qureshi and Caroline Wall - your support was invaluable.

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Most importantly I must mention my family, Jon Rebello, Frances Rutter, Robert Riding, Liyuan Liang, Joe Castle and Kate Katafiasz - thank you all for your love, support and conviction that I could do this. And finally, to thank Janice Wright, Sonya Russell-Saunders, Grace Williams and Reid Smith - for being there at such key moments.

'We become - with each other or not at all.' (Haraway, 2016 p4)

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## Notes for the reading/experiencing on the Research Catalogue platform:

This thesis was drawn together with the intention that it would be experienced through the Research Catalogue platform.

The text version is made available to aid accessibility.

- The Title, Abstract and Contents page has my voice(audio) and a text of the title and abstract and has links to all the thesis chapters on the right-hand side ('blue' hyperlinks which are underlined on hover)
- The introduction page has a voice and text 'intro', as do The Field and Methodology pages which additionally have voice and text 'conclusions'. Subsequent practice chapters have 'intro' and 'conclusion' as voice with the text as a 'pop up' ('hover' over player). The 'intro' will play once automatically as you enter the chapter (in some browsers you may need to 'allow' the audio and video to automatically play); the 'conclusion' audios are set playing by the reader, the players for these are in the 'links' panel. (The Conclusion chapter has no voice audio)
- All chapters contain multiple elements. The audio, video and image elements are visible on the page, in places there are links to these from the texts when specific elements referred to. Information for these elements will appear when you 'hover' over them, the controls are available so you can play, stop or change volume.
- Each chapter has a 'links' panel, this gives a very simple overview of the chapter with hyperlinks to text elements on the page, in some there are links to additional supporting elements, and all have a link back to the 'contents' page. Some text elements have scroll bars, these again will appear when you hover over the text area.
- Background '*gathering*' audio will play as you enter the page and run continuously, the controller for this is in the bottom left-hand corner on the page if you wish to change or mute the volume. On some browsers, you can open multiple chapters at the same time and hear elements from across them concurrently.

## Abstract:

This practice research PhD employs concerns of affect theory, sound/fine art, aural ecologies and emergent praxis, while utilising an embodied crip/neurodivergent approach. Investigating sound and affect through the lens of Masumi's description of 'microperceptions' (from Leibnitz) and linking this to the multifacetedness of aural ecologies. Working with/through gathered materials, exploring initially 'microperceptions' as triggers of non-conscious affective response, and through the praxis adding other elements that inform the making of original artworks as sites of affective encounter.

This is a constantly developing, heuristic following, through tests and experimentation for the unfolding of a unique approach to research and creation of fine art works that explore and explicate my/our non-conscious affective response to our quotidian sonic environment. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's Smooth and Striated symbiotic spaces, to create a *scaffolding* for working with; affecting slippery *stuff*, this 'bodymind', and to maintain the affecting qualities of the materials.

The praxis centres on gathered sounds and images from spaces/situations, where these are less important than the small things that might be occurring within them. The sites/titles of gathering: *Early Tests & Experiments*, *The Cairngorms*, *Dyffryn*, *About*, *Coventry*, *The Dyffryn Book* and *Gathering Closer*. From these audio-visual works have been constructed and exhibited investigating affect and embodied encounter.

This submission, recognising and exploring the porosity/permeability of sounds/spaces/time/bodies/affects, is a drawing together of materials gathered across the research and considering new knowledge/approaches in an exhibition and Research Catalogue expositions as sites for the thesis, which sets the practice in its research context.

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# Chapter One

## Introduction:

## Links text for RC:

This chapter briefly outlines the key concerns of the research (voice and text on RC), including what drew me to these areas of investigation.

This enquiry is a meeting and merging of many elements through the journey.

I outline the form of this thesis and my decision to use the Research Catalogue platform. I reflect that much of this work sites just outside of language, and that this informed my approach of using *scaffolds* to support my activity.

I touch upon the places of, and materials gathered and conclude with a description of my premise for the VIVA exhibition.



FOCUS: (focus, aims and objectives as voice and text in RC)

*"The concerns of this research are in developing approaches to, and an understanding of, gathering the affecting dimensions/atmospheres of my/our quotidian sonic environment, and how the materials, mediated through this 'bodymind', can be brought together in the creating of spaces/art installations that have potential for embodied encounter.*

*I am 'looking' through my crip/neurodivergent/ (feminist) new materialist/situated knowledge/embodied researcher lens, at the use(fullness) that I have, and that being this 'bodymind' can bring to this praxis project and area of research, recognising this is an (affect) heuristic following of things in the wind.*

*There can be no starting at the beginning; this is a journey through a changing landscape of praxis/practices that have developed my knowledges through doing/thinking/research. It is a drawing together of elements, observing and reflecting on how they affect, and are affected by, all that is around them, and working with the porosity of sound/spaces/bodies in all of this.*

Aim:

*Developing an art practice research methodology, through a heuristic praxis, to explore the utilisation of scaffolds in facilitating the working with and gathering of affecting materials, for creating atmospheres and spaces of/for embodied encounter.*

## *Objectives:*

- *To explore/seek the affective dimension of everyday sounds and how they operate as sense/meaning making materials.*
- *To develop research methods through approaches from my gathering and processing practice.*
- *To create new moments of embodied response and spaces of affective atmospheres in sound installation works.”*

## Before:

I had never seen myself as 'involved' in sound, thinking of sound in the context of 'music', and recognising myself as not 'musical'. This changed over several years while working with moving image; my interest was caught by the snippets of sound picked up as I filmed (most of my work at that time being silent) and extended as I became more aware of 'sound art'. Watching/listening to performance/sound artist Toshiya Tsunoda's work, with 'field recordings' from the spaces they were working in and experiencing Chris Watson and BJNilsen's *'storm'* live at the Arnolfini in 2007, I was viscerally aware of the power that the sound had and the ways it could bodily inform a 'viewer'. I have always made works around and worked with things of the commonplace and everyday, and I had begun to explore 'affect theory' in relation to the works I was making during my MA. These interests started to come together and coalesce into a proposal. Initially I had thought that this research would take place through the making of sonic works alone, but imagery never quite left, and I have begun to see its place in this.

## Meeting and merging:

This research is situated at the meeting and merging points of many elements and is explored through the *gathering* of materials, making of artworks, affect theory, visual and sound art practice, emergent praxis/methodologies, crip/neurodivergent paradigms and approaches, and ‘thinking’ of event and activation (quiet points of encounter). Within this I am an embodied researcher.

The affective turn influences understanding of how we communicate, interact and respond to situations and environments, informing many areas, including arts practice through artist/writers such as Simon O’Sullivan, transmission and movement of affecting experience outlined by theorists such as Theresa Brennan, and ‘If one wanted to locate an origin point for the increasingly widespread adoption of the concept of ‘affect’ .... the candidate most likely to succeed would be philosopher Brian Massumi<sup>1</sup> (Rekret, p2017), from whom I draw much, particularly in relation to microshocks and affective event.

Sound is physical material *stuff*<sup>2</sup>, made by movement affecting adjacent molecules, and so it travels, reaching our ears, our skin (or a microphone), moving delicate surfaces, and entering our bodies. We cannot fully shut off from it; we have no ‘ear lids’ (Dolar, 2006), it reaches our brains to be decoded, as physical sensations, but additionally in terms of how we interpret and what we ‘make’ of it. I gather the signal of those vibrating molecules; temporarily dematerialised I can work with them and construct ‘new’ linked things, then ‘rematerialised’ into another space where ‘otherbodies’ can encounter, interact and mingle. With sound there is always a slippage and seepage with spaces and ‘bodies’. We can look at a picture without altering it; we cannot experience sound without it being changed and added to by our presence, or another’s journey, a wall, the weather.

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<sup>1</sup> Who is also the translator into English of Deleuze and Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus*, a key text which informed my thinking about smooth and striated in relation to scaffolds, and introducing me to haecceities, which lead to quiddities - and so to the thisness and whatness which informed my understanding of sound as ‘tiggers’ of prior experiencing.

<sup>2</sup> From the middle English stoffe from Old French estoffe ‘material, furniture’ – my use of ‘stuff’ is outlined further in the first of the practice chapters *Early tests & Experiments*. There are a number of words which become key through/to this research, I outline their etymology and my use of them though the thesis

This thesis is written from my 'position', described through my autoethnographic 'voice', 'not only [trying] to make personal experience meaningful and cultural experience engaging, but also, [to produce] accessible texts,' (Ellis, Carolyn, et al. 27), which is appropriate for the delicacy, fragility and transient nature of what I am working with. I am 'central' in this research; I am not looking at this through an objective detached lens, I am an embodied researcher and Sarah Ahmed's *What's The Use* (2019) gave me a space to reconsider and recognise the use in this 'bodymind', and develop an emancipatory methodology, making a case/place for 'me', and that others might find useful to build with/upon.

Being crip/neurodivergent is a fundamental part of what makes me the person/artist I am. The 'turn towards affect' is of interest in considering other ways that things are communicated and passed on, and a departing from dualities, particularly of body/mind. I experience everything in relation, acutely attuned to waves of impact from small things on my 'skin' at all times which affect the whole of me, I am interested in the quotidian and everyday because of my variable attention and this sensing/feeling/experiencing. This means I key into details, bits, *stuff*, and take real and considered notice, giving me 'an intense interest, a passionate concern that calls out to the researcher, one that holds important social meanings and personal, compelling implications' (Moustakas, 1990, p. 27).

*Bodymind* is a term from Disability Studies which is outlined in the methodology, it is a recognising that the body and mind are not separate, that experiencing is across them both. This is particularly pertinent to my neurodivergent (again outlined in methodology) experiencing of the world. I use 'this bodymind' in this writing for several reasons; in all honesty it initially just felt 'right', then considering it more deeply, I recognised this as a multifaceted thing. Firstly, I am proudly owning '*this bodymind*', it is a positive and forthright statement of what/who I am. Secondly, 'my bodymind'<sup>3</sup> feels passive and personal to 'me'; I recognise I am working from a subjective situated position, but I am

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<sup>3</sup> I do at points say 'my bodymind', when I am describing this or being more personal.

acknowledging 'that' knowing, and sharing it. Additionally, 'my bodymind' seems a describing of something separate from the reader and the rest of the world. '*This bodymind*,' is present and active; the reader can also be 'this', it is a form of illeism and maybe gives 'me' a little 'distance', while within this is an extimacy, a sharing and embroiling of myself with the reader and all the (bodies of) the world around me.

## The form and a way in:

The thesis has ten chapters and has been constructed on the Research Catalogue (RC) platform as this allows for a mingling of 'text' and 'practice', meaning the 'elements' that make up the praxis research can be experienced together, in a shifting non static form, which correlates to the work I make. The 'form' of the thesis is this Introduction, the Field Survey, the Methodology, then five central practice chapters followed by *Gathering Closer*/Conclusion.

The practice chapters *Early Tests & Experiments*, *The Cairngorms*, *Dyffryn*, *About*, *Coventry* and *The Dyffryn Book* and are set out in a basic chronology but many aspects overlapped, are interrelated and co-occurrent<sup>4</sup>. The praxis research; a *gathering*, holding and constructing, which through the mediation and situated knowledge of this 'bodymind', shifts the materials from documentation to new spaces, occurrence and knowings.

The Research Catalogue platform facilitates the construction of expositions in a way that draws parallels between this 'part' of the submission and how I construct art works and presentations: a drawing together of 'elements' and modes of experiencing, text written in 'chunks' contextualising the praxis and explicating thinking and the visual background to the 'chapters' a diagram from the time of its coming together. In the practice chapters, these diagrams are overlayed with photographs from *gathering* and showing activities and intermingled with documentation and audio and film/still materials from works made. All the chapters have recordings of elements of the text, in my voice, and audio of the *Gathering Closer* of this whole. The Praxis is brought together in this way with the aim that; the diagrams and photographs locate, the structure holds a space open, my voice links me to the text and you the reader to me. Hopefully a route emerges to explore the 'work' together and through the journey a picture of the activity and developed knowings materialises.

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<sup>4</sup> In some chapters there are links to additional bits of the 'terrain' – places you can visit if you wish – but do not have to. They contain some additional small works, descriptions and information on sites of *gathering* and presentations, papers and articles.

There is not a set route; meander, explore, jump about in a non-linear way if you wish. If you stand at a point in the exhibition, you will more prominently hear and see certain elements, as with these expositions, where you 'place' yourself will make the view slightly different, allowing the viewer/reader to knit up the *stuff* in their own way, through a sharing of elements and communicating how they came together at my own points of reflection. Mine is not a solo journeying, it is a building with and around others. Simon O'Sullivan describes rethinking and reworking as a process of 'affirmation of other practices, activities and works' (2006 p43). It is a meeting of elements, bits of *stuff* of the *spaces/places/fields* I have been working in, my autoethnographic describing of activity, experience and ideas, literature read, discussion, shifting and moving things with emerging thinking coming together and briefly coalescing. These elements/*this stuff* linked to micro/petit perceptions in affect theory, and the seeping, shifting, permeability of this, all parallels these qualities in affect, sound, bodies and spaces.



## Being outside language:

Much of this enquiry pertains to *stuff* that is just outside of language, the definable and the definite. I consider how I/we experience non-linguistically in/with art practice, how understanding and writing affect is problematic as 'affect cannot be fully realised in language, because affect is always prior to and or outside of consciousness' (Massumi, 1987). I am exploring whether I can use 'affect heuristic' as a method, informed by my gut response, in a process of seeking and being open to the *sensed*, the 'microshocks' as I gather, edit, draw together and construct spaces /works.

I am inviting you to join me in knowing/not knowing, through non-linguistic 'other' forms of communication, snippets of text, and the transmission of *sensed stuff*; the relationship between 'bodies', the work, and the thinking is to be found in the materials and what occurs. I/you must be in a place of being open, excepting that not all will be revealed/visible; this is work that is between affect, embodied experiencing, language and sound. It is a looking for things not to be found, or more accurately 'named', which if 'unearthed' for textual describing, by nature, are then no longer what was *sensed*.

## *Scaffolding:*

As I began, 'I didn't intend to create a swirling, multi-branched pattern of histories, feelings, and ideas. I planned to craft a half dozen interlocking essays. I imagined a simple, well-laid out collage. But as so often happens with creative projects, I've ended up somewhere I never envisioned. I wrote a mosaic.' (Clare 2017, p. xv-xviii) At times I feel that collage or mosaic might be apt descriptions<sup>5</sup>, of the drawing together of this research, but right now I am not sure. I do know that using *scaffolds* and structures has been essential in all the work, recognising links between a budding thinking about these and Smooth and Satiated (Deleuze and Guattari 2004) spaces in affect theory, supporting this as a developing approach from the first conference paper put together during *Early Tests & Experiments* and through all chapters of the thesis.

My *scaffolds* are often very simple and are in use in the construction of all the works, including this thesis. (The text version of the thesis could be seen as a *scaffold* for the reader, allowing a way to access to the 'writing' on a 'standard' page). I have asked the reader to come on a journey through gathered small 'sparkles' that are not completely 'holdable' but present, and to try and see the spaces I am holding open. To this end, I have tried to give maps, repeat structures, 'hooks' so the terrain becomes more familiar. But there is a balance to be kept: I must not just follow a 'scheme', I am trying to write a narrative of what was done, why, and what that means to/for the research. I am trying to write this in my first-person voice, I need the meander, the writing as listening to parts of the works, the drifting and not taking note; otherwise, I would grind to a halt, stultified by a system, and this is about affect and *felt/sensed* things, and needs the space for those. Therefore into 'my plan' goes that need; the free form moments where text is produced, and to pull myself back to those to edit and sort. These *scaffolds* need to be flexible, mutable and porous, they need to 'hold open a space' but not stultify or contain.

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<sup>5</sup> Collage, more organised, softer and more merged; mosaic, separate elements that merge less, but both make up 'pictures'.

## The practice places and 'materials':

The practice research centres around my commonplace and everyday aural landscapes, the sites of *gathering* selected often for pragmatic reasons, accessibility, prior knowledge and wondering if there might be something 'occurring' in them. This is a material-based practice, where the materials stand for nothing other than 'themselves'; I do not abstract or distort them. I gather *stuff* of the quotidian, as 'some junk on the street can be fascinating to people and can thus seem to come alive. But is this evanescence a property of the *stuff* or of people? Was the thing power of the debris I encountered but a function of the subjective and intersubjective connotations, memories, and affects that had accumulated around my ideas of these items?' (Bennett, 2010 p10). I explore the properties, the qualities, the haecceities and quiddities<sup>6</sup>, of the *stuff* - these *microelements* of my/our sonic environment - wanting to understand what it may be in them that might affect/trigger a response, how they might be linked, what might *scaffold* that linking, as well as considering 'how' they need to come together and be in relation with each other, bodies and a space. The works I make are not documentary pieces, or solely about the spaces the materials are gathered in; they are 'of' my experiencing, all the making/doing mediated through this 'bodymind'. I construct and draw together the elements in a way to elicit an understanding/sharing of the multifacetedness of this *stuff* and what it pertains to, as well as having space for bodies to encounter and affect the 'new work' in its final making.

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<sup>6</sup> Outline further throughout the thesis particularly in The *Coventry* chapter.

## Gathering Closer, in conclusion:

*Gathering Closer* is the title of the VIVA exhibition. It is an audio-visual installation work, (the wider *Gathering Closer* work is outlined further in a foreword to the conclusion chapter), a practice drawing together of things made/understood through the journey of the PhD. Centred around a table/desk, which is/was/will be my 'working position', the 'audience' invited to sit there and/or walk around and explore the space. The 'materials' of the show will comprise of elements - audio, film/images and text - from all the 'sites of *gathering*', including through the 'writing up', as well as 'props and supports' such as my notebook, a table and chair, equipment, projection surfaces etc. The exhibition, put together utilising the new knowledge from this research, through my embodied process of being open and porous to the materials and the site it occupies. None of the constituent parts 'new' - but the meetings and entanglements will be new occurrences - drawn together through my 'affect heuristic' and a 'having things' in mind. A new space of affecting atmospheres, new meetings and experiencings, with the potentials for embodied encounter.

## Chapter Two

### Field Survey:

Links text for RC: (and as voice)

*"This research is a meeting of elements, this survey aims to introduce and outline the 'field' that informed this exploration, including visual and sound art/ists and theory, philosophical, historical and fiction texts. The chapter begins with an outline of art (in its broadest sense) practice and theory considered. Followed by an overview of 'affect theory' as the central theoretical concern of this enquiry, where I position myself within this, and then a summary of pertinent criticisms. I go on to describe the areas of affect that particularly inform this praxis research, namely the trickiness of writing 'affect', that it is always multifaced and active, 'microshocks' (Leibnitz through Massumi) as triggers of affective response, how affect is transmitted and the notion of 'The Smooth and Striated' (from Deleuze and Guattari) which informs my 'scaffolding' approach across all the work."*

There is a further brief voice and text element at the end of this chapter, which links this survey into the rest of the thesis.

## Visual/sound art/ists, theatre and writing:

As an artist/researcher it is pertinent to outline experiencing of art works and discussions, prior to and within this process, from which thinking has arisen, including: Chris Watson and BJNilsen's work '*storm*' live (Arnolfini:2007/Touch Records, 2006) which included approaches from across field/wildlife sound recording, music, sound broadcast techniques, and sound art; the influence of Toshiya Tsunoda's, '*Extract from Field Recording Archive*' Series 1-3, (1993-2018) which was conceived as a catalogue of physical vibrations; and the way Ed Atkins's work '*Bastards*' (2014 [Exhibition] Palais De Tokyo, Paris) informed how I might begin to make 'spaces' in *Early Tests & Experiments*; and an approach to layering information and stimulus considered in *Coventry* following seeing Elizabeth Price's '*Felt Tip*' (2018 [Exhibition] Nottingham Contemporary).

I participated in practical workshops with Chris Watson and Jez Riley French across *Early Test & Experiments* and *The Cairngorms*, these included much discussion and sharing of ideas. I worked alongside Stans Cafe to gather materials in *About* and reflect on a later work of theirs in relation to their interest in 'making dramatic' the commonplace/everyday, whereas I am interested in its 'nondramatic' qualities. There have also been discussions with fellow PhD researchers, staff at Birmingham City University, and many other artists.

I consider sound art theory including: R. Murray Schafer's description of the symphonies all around us all the time in *The Soundscape Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (1994), particularly in *Early Test & Experiments* and *The Cairngorms*; Cathy Lane and Angus Carlyle's *In the Field: The Art of Field Recording* (2013) and *On Listening* (2013) have supported and informed my processes of working across the practice; and Salome Voegelin's *Listening to Noise and Silence: Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art* (2010) developed thinking in relation to sound and memory.

Reading Yves Lomax's *Sounding the Event: Escapades in Dialogue and Matters of Art, Nature and Time* (2005) extended my understanding of event; its properties of only there in that moment, and once named or acknowledged is past, is key to my approaches to activating spaces, and correlates with my bodily sensing of 'things'. This links with the 'new materialism' outlined by Jane Bennett in '*Vibrant Matter*' (2010) – and by Dolphijn and van der Tuin in *New materialism: Interviews and Cartographies* (2012) in that New Materialism in its, "searches for how matter comes into agential realism, how matter is materialized in it. It is interested in speeds and slowness', in how the event unfolds according to the in- between, according to intra-action. New materialism argues that we know nothing of the (social) body until we know what it can do. It agrees with studying the multiplicity of modes that travel, natureculture as the perpetual flow it has always already been". (Dolphijn and van der Tuin, 2012 p. 113). New Materialism tangles event, affect and the power of 'things' to create these and be active in what happens, my thinking is based in an 'activeness of everything', that *stuff* as the material of the world and affects, is affected by everything else.

Geoffrey Batchen, *Each Wild Idea: Writing, Photography, History* (2002) has influenced my thinking, influenced my recognising and consideration of the role of my 'desire', supported my experiencing of transitory moments, a 'just then', and gather parts of those and work with them, which developed into my understanding that experiencing and desire generates in me a frisson, an indicator of my own affective response. Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*. (2019), has facilitated understanding the importance of *gathering* in my practice/research, informing a clearer understand my own approach, and my reading of Maurizio Lazzarato's outline of Vertov's approach to film making, *Videophilosophy* (Chapter 1, The War Machine of the Kino-Eye and the Kinoki Against the Spectacle) has informed my understanding of 'my' place in my process.



## *An overview of affect:*

### Overview:

Theories of affect originate with the 17th century philosopher Spinoza. These were expanded on by philosopher Gilles Deleuze and psychiatrist Felix Guattari (second half of C20th), and further expounded by contemporary social theorist and philosopher Brian Massumi<sup>7</sup>. Spinoza used two terms - affectus and affectio<sup>8</sup>. Deleuze suggests 'terminological caution' is needed when using these terms<sup>9</sup>, and says 'when I use the word "affect" it refers to Spinoza's affectus, and when I say the word "affection," it refers to affectio'. There is often a confusion between affect, feelings and emotions, Massumi argues for a more defined split between affect and emotion than Spinoza, suggesting that it does not denote a personal feeling, rather it is 'an ability to affect and be affected. It is a prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body's capacity to act' (2004, pxvii).

The distinction between feeling, emotion and affect is clarified by Shouse (2005, p1):

- feeling; 'a sensation that has been checked against previous experiences and labelled'.
- emotion; 'the projection / display of a feeling'
- affect; 'a non-conscious experience of intensity; it is a moment of unformed and unstructured potential'; 'affect is what makes feelings feel. It is what determines the intensity (quantity) of a feeling (quality), as well as the background intensity of our everyday lives'.

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<sup>7</sup> Massumi translated Deleuze and Guattari's 'A Thousand Plateaus' into English

<sup>8</sup> The Stanford encyclopaedia of philosophy (LeBuffe 2022)- describes the difference as - 'affect' [affectus]. The affects, in turn, are a species of "affection" [affectio], modification or quality, a notion embedded deep in Spinoza's metaphysics.

<sup>9</sup> Deleuze says in COURS VINCENNES - 24/01/1978 –

I begin with some terminological cautions. In Spinoza's principal book, which is called the Ethics and which is written in Latin, one finds two words: AFFECTIO and AFFECTUS. Some translators, quite strangely, translate both in the same way. This is a disaster. They translate both terms, affectio and affectus, by "affection." I call this a disaster because when a philosopher employs two words, it's because in principle he has reason to, especially when French easily gives us two words which correspond rigorously to affectio and affectus, that is "affection" for affectio and "affect" for affectus. Some translators translate affectio as "affection" and affectus as "feeling" [sentiment], which is better than translating both by the same word, but I don't see the necessity of having recourse to the word "feeling" since French offers the word "affect."

Shouse's description of affect being in 'the half-sensed, on-going hum of quality/quantity that we experience when we are not really attuned to any experience at all (2005, p2) speaks very directly to my experiencing of our shifting, fluctuating everyday aural environments, and the ways it informs our interactions with our environment. Our brains filter much of this out of our 'consciousness'; we relegate it as 'background', however sound constantly 'tells' us things, modifying and informing how we interrelate with the world around us.

Two branches of affect theory are often described (Truran, 2022, p26), one coalesces around Deleuze, Guattari and Massumi, the other siting within feminist, queer and cultural theory, where Lauren Berlant identifies the "multiple affective registers of collective life" (Berlant & Prosser, 2011b, p183) and a "materialist context for affect theory" (Berlant, 2011a, p14), and Sara Ahmed traces specific emotions through a phenomenological orientation as "the affect of one surface upon another, an affect that leaves its mark or trace" (Ahmed, 2014, p6). This trace connects lived experience, emotion, and affective contact as "we are affected by 'what' we come into contact with" (Ahmed, 2006, p. 2)

### My position and concerns:

I (if allowed) suggest, as a simple portrayal, affectus as the 'affect' (experienced) and affectio as the 'modification' or shift, through interaction, in active power, of a body. In many ways my use of the term 'affect' is a conflation of both, and I am thinking with the ideas from Spinoza, Deleuze et al, while walking beside feminist new materialisms. I am linking 'microperceptions' (Massumi, from Leibnitz) to the multitude of elements in the quotidian (visual and) sonic landscapes we inhabit and encounter, and exploring how the bodily, non-concise knowings and response from/to these can bring us into relation with spaces, trigger links and memories, and bring us to a place of being bodily embroiled in an environment.

## Affect, problems and criticisms:

I am conscious of, and interested in, the difficulty of pinning down and describing affect. It is a concept that in part sits outside linguistics/text, and because affect has been adopted by many fields including social and cognitive sciences, neurology, psychology, art and media theory, there is not a consensus on its meanings or usage.

Within the 'affective turn' there is, as with many ideas that challenged generally accepted conventions, no consensus about its usefulness. 'Affect theory' is described as a broad field and often (Gregg, Seigworth, 2010 & Turan 2022) it is criticised for being a Eurocentric approach and Leys (2011) suggests it recreates a body/mind split, a duality because of affect's primacy of the body over the mind, criticising Massumi for an 'either or logic'. I am not persuaded that Massumi separates mind/body; I suggest that, in speaking of intentionality and bodily reactions, there is a recognition of conscious and nonconscious action. Wetherall (2012) proposes that the route I am taking, of practice being part of considering/working with affect, may be a way into understanding.

Criticisms of writing on affect<sup>10</sup> include that many people write affect as personal experiencing, describing their own physical, bodily, responsive mode, labelling this as a problem of 'subjective descriptions'. (van Alphen, Jirsa, (eds) 2019). I suggest that there is a problem if we say, "this is how I experienced it, so this is how this is", but in acknowledging (my) subjectivity, and describing my experiencing autoethnographically can share an understanding of it.

While acknowledging criticisms, I do think that affect theory is key to exploring and understanding pre/nonconscious experiencing, and positing that this is how we are 'involved' with our quotidian sonic environments it must be central to my developing approaches to making installations of affecting atmospheres with potential for moments of embodied response, and through embodied research methods. I will

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<sup>10</sup> Including those raised in the introduction to 'How to Do Things with Affect' (van Alphen, Jirsa, (eds) 2019). which also talks of affect as an activator and how it comes or can be put into play in situations.

need to 'hear' and 'listen for/to' my bodily reactions, exploring affect as activator, through its activation of 'me'. I experience no split into dualities of body/mind, and affect theory positively releases a way of having *scaffolds* of intent to support the embodied sensing processes. Additionally, it aids in the understanding of a 'usefulness' for the particularities of my subjective situated knowledge as a crip/neurodivergent researcher/artist.

## *Key elements of affect that inform this research:*

### Affect as multifaceted and active:

Key to my understanding of affect and how I might work with/through it has been recognising that it is not one thing (or even a thing at all), but part of what makes us 'experience'. Massumi, describing affect, suggests that you must accept 'the manyness of its forms' if you are going to understand it as, 'not a thing,... [but] a dimension of every event' (Massumi, 2009, p3), returning to Spinoza's definition of affect as an "ability to affect or be affected", as 'two facets of the same event'. This is picked up by Deleuze as the power to affect and be affected, governing a felt transition, a change in state, that 'what is felt is the quality of the experience'. Massumi states that 'Starting from affect in this way is an invitation for an indefinitely constructive thinking of embodied, relational becoming.' (Massumi, 2009, p3)<sup>11</sup> My investigation of how I can construct for embodied response considers the possibilities of activating spaces so 'event' can occur, and considering affect as a multifaceted dimension of experience in which there are many 'bodies' that need to come together, Bennett (2010 p23) states that 'Spinoza believes, for example, that the more kinds of bodies with which a body can affiliate, the better, "as the body is more capable of being affected in many ways and of affecting external bodies . . . so the mind is more capable of thinking"'. This understanding of the multifacetedness of affect informs my approaches, I explore this further particularly in the reflection on the exhibitions made in *Dyffryn* and *About* chapters.

### Microperceptions/shocks:

As the early practice research progressed, 'microperceptions/shocks' come to the fore in relation to informing/triggering bodily response and opening a 'view' of links between 'microperceptions'/affect and our experiencing of our everyday sonic environment. Deleuze and Guattari (2004 p8) use "microperception", Massumi "microshock" and the 17th century philosopher Leibniz, (who originates the idea) "petites/small

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<sup>11</sup> Continuing – 'The emphasis on embodiment, variation, and relation gives it an immediately political aspect that also attracted me.' While politics is not of itself something I am exploring in my wider research, but "politics" is a large part of the quoted Massumi interview and mentioned in relation to Leibniz's thinking by Lambert both it is referenced in relation to activation of spaces and the transmission of affect through bodies.

perceptions". Massumi describes them as; 'not (a) smaller perception; it's a perception of a qualitatively different kind. It's something that is felt without registering consciously. It registers only in its effects' (Massumi 2009, p2). I describe 'microperceptions' and how they inform my developing thinking in the chapter *The Cairngorms*. Massumi clearly links the bodily trigger of affect to microshocks, saying: 'Affect for me is inseparable from the concept of shock. It doesn't have to be a drama<sup>12</sup>. It's really more about micro-shocks, the kind that populate every moment of our lives. For example, a change in focus, or a rustle at the periphery of vision' (Massumi, 2009, p3). This 'rustle and shift' becomes what I am 'looking for', extrapolating 'microperceptions' as 'elements' in the sonic environment, *stuff* to gather and work with. I link these with multielement/multifaceted shifting, moving points of encounters, these writings bring a sense of the sonic spaces we inhabit, and the potential spaces I can 'construct'. I merge elements of theory/practice/praxis in a way that shifts materials from a representation/recording to a new and active encounter through a dynamic process of exploration.

### Capacity to memory and transmission:

Affect and 'microperceptions' are linked to a capacity or potential for active/event/encounter and so transmission or movement through 'bodies'. Lambert (2013, p90) outlines Leibniz's description of crowds and the transmission through bodies and actions of an individual which when taken up by a group make a bigger action<sup>13</sup>, Massumi states an interest in political microshock/affect and uses the example of how most of us react to an alarm such as a fire bell: the small actions of individuals come together with others to create a group response. He talks of affective politics as inductive (causative) and that 'Bodies can be inducted into, or attuned<sup>14</sup> to, certain regions of tendency, futurity, and potential' (Massumi 2009, p3) but that because of our individual 'previous cuing' there will not be a uniformity of responses.

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<sup>12</sup> I am also not concerned with the dramatic, more the commonplace and everyday.

<sup>13</sup> an example used is the picking up of litter, the cleaner streets are, the less litter is dropped.

<sup>14</sup> Interesting in terms of language use, attuned relates to sound as well as being receptive to, harmonious. Etymology C16th at + tune

Shouse states that 'every form of communication where facial expressions, respiration, tone of voice and posture are perceptible can transmit affect, and that list includes nearly every form of mediated communication other than the one you are currently experiencing' (2005). He suggests that the power of affect lies in its abstract, unformed and unstructured nature and that this is what makes affect transmittable <sup>15</sup>. This thinking supported my intention to put something of my affecting encounter into another space, so that another body might experience it.

These potentials/capacities, fed my exploration into utilising my affect-based responses (an affect Heuristic) to gather affecting, active, *stuff* in one place/space which might be constructed into another. These are materials with potentials to move through/between and be influenced by bodies, which can form active spaces of event/experience, and be further affected/activated through the 'cueing' that happens in an individual's encounter.

The 'cuing' of an individual's encounter advances the considering of affect/'microperception' aligns with the making of memory and its later recall. Massumi says there is 'no such thing as starting from scratch' (Massumi, 2009, p3) things are always related to what's happened before. When the quality of the experience is felt, that 'transition' leaves a trace, a memory; therefore it's not restricted to that one occurrence, Massumi (2009, p2) states that 'the capacitation of the body as it's gearing up for a passage towards a diminished or augmented state is completely bound up with the lived past of the body. That past includes what we think of as subjective elements, such as habits, acquired skills, inclinations, desires, even willings, all of which come in patterns of repetition. This doesn't make the event any less rooted in the body.'

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<sup>15</sup> in ways that feelings and emotions are not.

Our reactions to a future affecting encounter are modified by earlier events that travel forward with us and in a region of relation; things will play out differently every time. Making our experiences and how we carry them forward, part of an ongoing dynamic event that is ever-shifting and altering and that when we 'meet' something our experience of it is particular to that moment; we can never meet it in quite the same way again; it will be 'a reactivation of the past in passage toward a changed future'( Massumi, 2009, p2).

### Writing affect:

I consider how affect can be written, and note the commonalities of the problems between writing affect and sound. To paraphrase Heidegger (2010 p158), we don't hear sounds, we hear the things making the sounds 'the creaking wagon', 'The north wind'; but we understand how "creaking" sounds and the different sounds of wind, although we don't easily have language to describe them. Affect is often described through a personal experiencing of what it 'does' to an individual and there is a difficulty in describing the concept of affect as it could be said to sit outside our linguistic deconstructive frameworks, and 'cannot be fully realised in language, because affect is always prior to and outside of consciousness', (Shouse, 2005)

Texts such as '*Ordinary Affects*' (Stewart, 2007) and '*The Hundreds*' (Berlant, Stewart, 2019) have extended my approaches to writing with and for affect. Both books are structured in 'chunks' under short headings<sup>16</sup>, an example under the heading 'potential' is 'Fleeting and amorphous, it lives as a residue or resonance in an emergent assemblage of disparate forms and realms of life.' (Stewart, 2007, p21), which for me is prose that brings 'something' alive more than most texts do<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> The Hundreds is all written in 100 word, or multiples of pieces. My writing is not so 'constrained', but I have given myself a word count for each of my 'chunks' that I feel is their 'appropriate proportion' in a chapter/the thesis.

<sup>17</sup> Lomax, *Sounding the Event*, (2005) has also informed my thinking on writing affect and event, and similarly makes things more that the words.



Through tests I have found chunks or 'elements' of texts (more manageable for 'this bodymind') to have potentials in my writing: they can be shifted and moved in editing and reading, and be moved through and linked by the reader in ways informed by own experiences and choice, resonating with my practice/making as they are more porous and slippery, and allow for an attunement with things that are occurring, a 'something' that is active in that moment.

Smooth and striated - *scaffolds* and structures:

I consider Deleuze and Guattari's Smooth and Striated spaces (2004, Plateau 1440) in relation to our everyday aural landscape, and the friction between methods, processes, and structures. Smooth space is described as 'filled by events or haecceities, far more than by formed and perceived things. It is a space of affects, more than one of properties' (Deleuze / Guattari, 2004 p501), reflecting my thoughts on how our sonic environment 'is', and this is considered in my praxis approaches to making spaces of embodied encounter. Haecceities lead me to quiddities, which are looked at in more detail in the *Coventry* practice chapter, and then recognising that the specificities, the 'thisness' and 'whatness' in the materials hold potential to link us with prior experience/memory. Smooth and Striated also facilitated my consideration of how 'things' that seem irreducible can work in 'collaboration', informing my use of a (temporary) 'structure' to support the unstructured/unstructurable as a way of 'managing' this barely tangible *stuff*.

Into the rest: (as Voice and text in RC)

*"The elements 'gathered' here of theory, and related texts, exhibitions, and artists' work and thinking, are added to in the next Methodology chapter. They are then 'worked with' through the 'doing' and entangled with my embodied research/making processes within the practice/praxis chapters. Things come to the fore and drop back through the journey of the research, but these 'elements' are always somewhere 'in mind' as I work."*

## Chapter Three

### Methodology:

## Links text for RC:

I begin this chapter introducing my 'assembling' of a methodology, which I then outline through sections on art praxis approaches and my affect heuristic linked to new materialist and situated knowledge thinking and described in my autoethnographic voice<sup>18</sup>.

I go on to outline: my crip/neurodivergent position, including my 'bodymind' as an imbricated site for/of research, that I am utilising structures and *scaffolds* to support this 'tricky' place of working with language/text within this terrain, and that this is all a *gathering* together. I then ask the reader to join me on this onwards journey.

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<sup>18</sup> I recognise my methods are subjective and culturally specific, they relate to 'me' and 'my' environment, I am very much 'in' this research.

(as voice and text on RC)

*"I have 'assembled' a methodology employing a matrix of methods that are appropriate for the investigating of the affective sense/meaning making dimensions of (my) everyday sonic situation, ways to 'gather' elements of these environments, and to construct with this stuff (and visual elements) original art (installation) works that are spaces of affective atmospheres with the potential for embodied encounter. Additionally, drawing together linked and overlapping approaches to explicating and sharing the new knowledge attained through the praxis in ways that support this 'bodymind' and to foster the aims of the research. Investigating as an embodied participant and exploring through process, texts, discussion and reflection, to draw elements into relation with each other and construct new approaches."*

Key to this investigation is affect theory, and how we affectively respond to our sonic environments. Exploring affect, not as a 'thing, but an aspect of every event' (Massumi, 2002), and 'microshocks' as the triggers of moments of affective response, necessitates the using of multimodal, multifaceted approaches to facilitate the *gathering* and drawing of elements together to make 'spaces' of new understanding and experiencing. I am not considering this as a critique of others' activities; it is an 'entanglement of matter and meaning' and am looking for the 'diffraction patterns that make the entanglement visible' (Barad in Dolphijn, van der Tuin, 2012). This enquiry is situated (in this bodyminds') feminist New Materialism<sup>19</sup>, in which the hypersensitivities of neurodivergence have '*use*' (Ahmed) as does approaching things from a different angle. My research process situated in my investigational art making and is positioned where 'the creative artefact is considered the embodiment of the new knowledge (Skains, 2018, p85). If 'a measure of the value of research is seen to be the capacity to create new knowledge and understanding that is individually and culturally transformative, then criteria need to move beyond probability and plausibility to possibility' (Sullivan, 2010, p95/96), so this must be a speculative space.

The multimodal, multifaceted methods used include:

- *Scaffolds* to support all the working and to hold spaces open for 'affect'.
- Art praxis and the creation of new art works, reflection on the processes and the works and informal discussion.
- Qualitative and dialectical approaches, exploring philosophical and theoretical texts, art works and discussion linking with practice in part through a 'holding in mind' of thoughts/ideas' as I 'work'.
- Using autobiographical/autoethnological textual writing, which come together through free writing and journalling notes, to communicate/explicate thinking.

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<sup>19</sup> 'Situated knowledges' and new materialism(s) described as – 'playing a pivotal role in foregrounding a feminist politics of difference' (Hinton, 2014) - 'new materialist feminisms have built on the linguistic turn which focused exclusively on discursive practices at the expense of the material world, developing an 'embedded and embodied' (Braidotti 2002, 2) material-discursive philosophy of difference and being in the world. (Bozalek, and Zembylas, 2016 P194) - and 'common characteristics of new materialists include the rejection of representationalism, humanism, and the intrinsic distinction of subjectivity and knowledge.' (Gamble, Hanan, and Nail. 2019)

Through my iterative reflective processes of working, thinking, making, reading and doing, approaches are modified and new understanding and knowledges that inform what comes next develop. 'Elements' come to light that become parts of constructing new approaches to making, in ways which hold potentials for an embodied encounter with affecting atmospheres.

## Art, Praxis:

At its core, this is enquiry undertaking through my 'doing'. Methods have developed from those of my longstanding practice, including the *gathering* of materials and a reflective embodied process of working with those in the creation of artworks. These are additionally utilised in my wider research and my drawing together of texts to explicate thinking and developing/ed knowledges. As "Methodologies in artistic research are necessarily emergent and subject to repeated adjustment, rather than remaining fixed throughout the process of enquiry" (Barrett / Bolt, 2007, p6), these have been constantly developing; this has been/is an organic, responsive iterative process of thinking/making/reading/discussion. The resulting exhibited art works and talks and papers, generating informal discussions, more considered reflection, and an emerging 'multi-method strategy' of 'practice raising questions that can then be investigated through research, which in turn impact on practice' (Gray/Malins, 2004, p1).

This research is a 'journey' exploring the sonic environments I 'live' within, affecting sensing of/through those, and entangled and embodied ways to communicate/share an/my experiencing of these places/spaces within the installations/art works I form. My own "immersive interaction carrying over into reflection and speculation towards new understandings – reinforces the intimate relationship between doing and knowing, action and reflection, practice and theory" (Gray and Delday 2011 p4), expanding my knowledge, while aiding in answering my questions and establishes what I can contribute to this field.



## Affect heuristic:

A heuristic<sup>20</sup> approach is apposite when 'looking for' affect. It could be said that the 'nose' I am following is the one attached to affective responses, an 'affect heuristic' perhaps? When using the phrase 'affect heuristic', I must acknowledge the term's recognised use in areas such as behavioural science and psychology, within which, 'the affect heuristic' (Slovic et al. 2007) is generally regarded negatively. Here, I am positing a different use of the term, only shifted slightly but in keyways which I suggest moves 'affect heuristic' into a space of being a useful element within my methodology.

Behavioural Science literature describes a shift in understanding through the early 2000's, from a belief that human decision making was based in rational cognitive processing, to one that includes acknowledgement of the role played by affective and experiential systems, and that 'The affect heuristic refers to the fact that people make judgments based on representations of objects or events that are marked with valenced affect.', (Skagerlund et al 2020). In the Behavioural Science context, 'the affect heuristic' is outlined as using prior experience to frame something as 'good' or 'bad', which then informs "system 1" fast (as opposed to "system 2" slow) processing (The Decision Lab, 2025) and deciding future action in response to this. While this is recognised as potentially useful within flight or fight response where 'speed' is needed, it is generally seen as a quick gut response which does not consider additional information that may be available or the context of the situation, therefore is viewed as 'limited' and a 'flawed process' within which our emotions can be manipulated by others in an attempt to control behaviour. (Nikolopoulou, K. 2023). In relation to affect, Slovic et al. (2007) go as far as to state that (as used in their paper), "affect" means the specific quality of "goodness" or "badness" (i) experienced as a feeling state (with or without consciousness) and (ii) demarcating a positive or negative quality of a stimulus.",

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<sup>20</sup> 'The root meaning of heuristic comes from the Greek word *heuriskein*, meaning to discover or find. It refers to an approach of internal search through which one discovers the nature and meaning of experience and develops methods and process for further investigation and analysis.' (Moustakas, 1990)

Within these frameworks, affect is connected to both the emotional charge associated with an experience or thing, and specific positive or negative 'qualities' of that experiencing. I consider *affect* as less directly linked to emotion<sup>21</sup>, within this research, I use affect to describe *felt sensed* experiencing, a 'stimulus' or activator of response, which may become understood as an emotion or could inform us about a *space/place/situation* in a range of other ways. I use *heurism* to describe enquiry that is direct, personal, empirical and from experiencing. Additionally, I am not using an 'affect heuristic' approach to my decision making, instead it is an element within my methodology which pertains to being open to my experiencing of the *stuff* of the world around us in a way to support the *gathering* of affecting *microelements* within those spaces/places/situations that I can possibly use in the constructing of works which hold some potentials of an affecting embodied response in others.

Recognising that 'Heuristic research differs considerably from other methodologies in that it views the researcher as a participant' (Djuraskovic / Arthur, 2010, p1572), supports the use of a subjective approach, and accepting that 'subjective action is necessary to make use of eventual creativity and produce change, this action is only secondary to the pre-conscious event of bodily-emotive affect in which creative force resides'. (Richter 2023, p134) further reinforces my use of 'affect heuristic', as one which can usefully describe a positive working with my own experiencing. Additionally, as we do not have the 'language' to ask or answer some questions around affect/experience (picked up at many points through this thesis, including *Language/text*: later in this chapter), it is difficult to quantify the "affectiveness" of works for 'viewers'<sup>22</sup>, adding to the rationale for this as an 'affect heuristic' enquiry, in which I am involved as subject, participant and researcher, following my nose attached to affective response.

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<sup>21</sup> In the *Field Survey*, I outline affect theory and my understanding of this.

<sup>22</sup> Viewed/viewer – problematic terms, in part because of their 'seeing' nature, and because it is a separating from the 'work' where meaning making occurs within and specifically at points of experiencing - but they are recognised/understood terms so I will use them.

## New materialism:

As well as looking inward to *sensed* experiencing and knowings, I must also look outward and explore my relationships to spaces, situations and all (bodies) active within them. I am the 'maker' of the works; recognising that the 'materials' are ones I gather, I am not 'abstracting' them, and am 'using' them to represent what they are. Additionally, the spaces I construct the works within and what/who moves through them, all 'add' to the things I make – bring something of 'themselves' into my works.

New materialism shifts how we consider the *stuff* of the world around us, 'Deleuze first turned to Spinoza and Leibniz because' they 'thought that all of nature was defined primarily by an immanent vital power or force' (Gamble /Hanan /Nail 2019, p119). I include in an idea of 'nature' everything around us; it all brings change to everything else it meets. None of us, and nothing at all, exists in isolation; we are always being affected and affecting everything else we meet and interact with in whatever small way. This can be seen as particularly pertinent to the 'making' of affecting/embodied art works, Braidotti's 'creative event is not produced by the reason or will of a human subject but rather originates in the affective creativity of post-human relations' (Richter 2023, p135). I think that art works only begin to 'live' when they are experienced by/with other bodies; an aim is to make 'things'/art works that 'hold' a potential for another body to experience an affecting embodied response, to which they will bring previous experiencing and bodily knowings, in spaces 'whose' activity and form will also inform what occurs.

To explore my objectives, I need to utilise methods and approaches that support and inform my *gathering* and working of/with affecting atmospheres/*microelements*. New Materialism recognises the unguarded, porous approach that I as an embodied researcher must try and hold 'open', as 'the capacity to detect the presence of impersonal affect requires that one is caught up in it. One needs, at least for a while, to

suspend suspicion and adopt a more open-ended comportment. If we think we already know what is out there, we will almost surely miss much of it.' (Bennett 2010 preface xv)

## Situated knowledge:

My methods are subjective, embodied<sup>23</sup> and in part situated in my knowing learned through my experience and long-term artistic practice. These inform all my undertakings, and are affected and developed by everything I do and experience. My 'situated difference' (Haraway 1988, p593) is particular to me, and a given point in time. This is the basis on which we interact, understand and experience everyday; 'The knowing self is partial in all its guises, never finished, whole, simply there and originality is always constructed and stitched together imperfectly, and therefore able to join with another, to see together without claiming to be another' (Haraway 1988, p586). So, even though my approach is subjective, situated and embodied, it is not isolated or unconnected; it is porous, leaky and entangled. Sutherland/Acord (2007, p126) suggest that 'knowledge production happens as a combined effort of creators, technology, mediators, artistic works, contexts and recipients – permeable and material art worlds', and 'Knowledge is, therefore, best understood as an embodied, tacit and contextual phenomenon, varied and subjective: a verb rather than a noun.' If this is the case, then these methods, working with/through my embodied response, following my 'affect heuristic', and speculatively seeing where things take me, are approaches that correlate with exploring and seeking affecting dimensions of everyday sonic environments. The aim is then to construct artworks with the potential for an embodied experience in another body – and to be able to reflect and draw out moments of new knowings from the praxis and works made.

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<sup>23</sup> 'Hearing' itself is an embodied activity, and so our relationship with sound is always an embodied one, a decoding of signal through our 'bodymind'.

## Autoethnography:

As research methods I am utilising include 'listening' to my own experiencing, through *gathering* of materials, making of artworks and reflecting on these and the *doing/thinking* processes, I have/am written/ing this in my voice. I have made notes through the processes; these have been used in the development of the texts, initially around the practice work that has developed into the central practice chapters, but increasingly, using prompts and free writing approaches to get together texts around 'what I was thinking', these have been worked with and developed (see later section in this chapter on 'text'). My writing is principally autoethnographic/autobiographical, it is describing my experiencing, and through this my linking of theories with what is understood through my practices.

Both embodied approaches and autoethnography can be seen as primary research. My 'writing' has several functions in the research process: a way of recording actions, thoughts, of developing approaches to sharing the research (in other ways than 'exhibitions'), the writing has become 'as a method, (autoethnography is) both process and product' (Ellis, et al. p27). In this I am an 'insider' - exploring what I 'make', developing thinking about the links with theoretical concerns, engaging in informal discussion and feedback, and reflexively considering all these elements. As with all of this/my research, my 'thinking' is not fixed, but shifting and changing, 'reality is neither fixed nor entirely external but is created by, and moves with, the changing perceptions and beliefs of the viewer' (Duncan, 2004. p30). These methods all feed into the developing 'picture', and a bringing into focus of possible points of new knowing.

## Crip/Neurodivergent 'me':

My self-identifying/describing as crip<sup>24</sup>/neurodivergent<sup>25</sup> has developed across this research - in part possibly because a heuristic methodology<sup>26</sup> necessitates the looking at and understanding more about oneself; a growing embracing of who/how I am, which draws on a neuro-positive understanding of my usefulness and social model approaches to disability. As it became clearer how 'situated' in this 'bodymind' and its experiencing all 'this' research would be, it became clear that I needed to directly speak to this.

My 'embracing', includes recognising the neurodiversity paradigm<sup>27</sup>, that there is no validity in the notion of a 'normal' brain or person; "once we've thrown away the concept of "normal," neurotypicals are just members of a majority – not healthier or more "right" than the rest of us, just more common"<sup>28</sup> (Walker 2013/2021). Knowing that the pathologizing of neurodivergence and physical impairment through a medicalised/deficit model 'disables' us, holds power and 'the masters tools' (Walker 2013/2021)<sup>29</sup>, I aim to be part of a 'joining with others and of 'troubling'<sup>30</sup> the 'premises of the logic of deficit' (Bertilsson Rosqvist, et al 2023).

The medical model's describing of 'our' situation to 'us', can inform, if the context is shifted from describing the neurodivergent as 'higher distractibility by irrelevant stimuli', that their 'sensory input(s) may not be properly regulated' (e.g. being flooded by sensory events), and 'the

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<sup>24</sup> Having a number of intersectional physical and ND conditions, I live with pain and fatigue, so function within my own 'criptime' (Kafer: 2013) which informs what I can do when.

<sup>25</sup> The term "neurodiversity" coined by Judy Singer, an Australian sociologist in 1998, recognising that everyone's brain, like their fingerprints, develops in a unique way.

<sup>26</sup> Heuristic research contains an implicit challenge, the importance of embracing the inevitability of being changed by the enquiry, continuing a process of personal growth which reflects my deep commitment to explore new territory within myself, (Djuraskovic & Arthur, 2010 p3).

<sup>27</sup> Walker (2013) says, 'Here's how I'd articulate the fundamental principles of the neurodiversity paradigm: Neurodiversity – the diversity among minds – is a natural, healthy, and valuable form of human diversity. There is no "normal" or "right" style of human mind, any more than there is one "normal" or "right" ethnicity, gender, or culture. The social dynamics that manifest regarding neurodiversity are similar to the social dynamics that manifest in regard to other forms of human diversity (e.g., diversity of race, culture, gender, or sexual orientation). These dynamics include the dynamics of social power relations – the dynamics of social inequality, privilege, and oppression – as well as the dynamics by which diversity, when embraced, acts as a source of creative potential within a group or society.'

<sup>28</sup> 'And Autistics are a minority group, no more intrinsically "disordered" than any ethnic minority.' (Walker, 2013)

<sup>29</sup> "Of all the master's tools (i.e., the dynamics, language, and conceptual frameworks that create and maintain social inequities), the most powerful and insidious is the concept of "normal people." - from Audre Lorde 'The masters tools will never dismantle the masters house'

<sup>30</sup> Relating this to "staying with the troubles" (Haraway, 2016),

inability to suppress irrelevant noises' (e.g. footsteps in the background while doing another task) (Schulze, et al 2020, p. 9, 27,29), and looked at through a different lens. Yes, I am flooded by sensory inputs, I cannot not notice<sup>31</sup>.

I live in a constantly 'aware' state: dancing light, shifting sounds, how the environment around me is changing, the 'atmosphere', how other 'bodies' seem to be. Movement and breath, shifting leaves in a breeze, the sounds of dust on a street in the summer. Changes in colour, temperature, light. Sounds of my pencil, the keyboard, my feet on the floor, my eyes moving, my blood flowing.... all with the fluctuating hum of the city, the *stuff* that is just sort of there all the time. I get a 'frisson'<sup>32</sup> from this *stuff*; this links me, makes me very attuned to the world around me, cognisant of small things, and moments. And I have a desire and a need to explore it, to share that being 'in it'. I am embracing my VAST<sup>33</sup> experience(ing), that my experiential knowings from the world around me are of 'use'<sup>34</sup>, and intrinsic to this research.

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<sup>31</sup> And wonder if these 'skills' of noticing, the sensing something shifting, has been and is of benefit to people and society, and that through our current 'neuro-normative' attitudes we might lose or miss some of these other 'tools'.

<sup>32</sup> I mention at another point 'the feeling of big thumbs', one of my bodily indicators of exciting/interesting/intriguing/perturbing (and many other things), I also get shivers, sometimes over my skin, sometimes through my whole body, there are other bodily indicators, the list is long and fluctuating, but these are the most common currently.

<sup>33</sup> ADHD needs a better name. We have one (Hallowell & Ratey 2021) –VAST: variable attention stimulus trait, a neuropositive approach

<sup>34</sup> I think of my 'use' in the context of Ahmed (2019).



## Bodymind:

I use the term 'bodymind', described by Margaret Price as 'the imbrication (not just the combination) of the entities usually called "body" and "mind"' (Price, 2015 p3). Price cites Garland-Thomson (Misfits: a feminist materialist disability concept, 2011) who explores 'bodymind' as a materialist feminist concept that directs attention to "the co-constituting relationship between the flesh and environment" and as 'a materialist feminist DS<sup>35</sup> concept'.

The holism of '*bodymind*' informs my 'considering' of my dif/disabled self and my engagement and responses to the world around me. I do not know if my 'frisson' begins with the thought, or the experiencing of, a breeze; but I know it ripples through, touching every part of me. Considering this with my 'affect heuristic' approach, and the move away from the duality of mind and body of The Affective Turn, I build a 'picture' of 'my bodymind' as an imbricated site of *felt/sensed/affective* responses that I inhabit as this embodied researcher.

This research is not about 'being disabled'; it is a following of fleeting/tangential things, a nebulous *gathering* of *stuff*. The work I make has filaments and elements which all slip and shift and change in every moment; in its 'methods' there is a reliance on the 'use' of my feminist (queer) crip (Kafer 2013) experiencing of the *stuff* of the world around me, and this sensing 'bodymind' as an environment of/for 'situated knowledge'.

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<sup>35</sup> Disability Studies.

## Structures and *scaffolds*:

From the start of this research, I have been considering approaches for working with the ‘tricky’ things that are affect and sound, as well as working with the textual requirements for explicating research ideas (as ‘this bodymind’). Thinking about the sorts of ‘supports’ I might utilise, ‘structures’, invisible but there in my mind’s eye; *scaffolding* to hold open a space.

*Scaffolded* pedagogical approaches can be described as ‘supportive elements added to a program’, ‘to provide a temporary framework in the form of support for learners’ and as dependant on “identifying the area that is just beyond but not too far beyond students” (Garfield and Holland 2012). My *scaffolding*<sup>36</sup> is more an approach to working with the ‘tricky’ theory, materials and aims that I am, particularly in the context of ‘this bodymind’<sup>37</sup>. I am thinking of *Scaffolding*<sup>38</sup> as a term relating to temporary supporting structures. I explore *scaffolds* in detail<sup>39</sup>, relating these with Deleuze and Guattari’s ‘Smooth and Striated’ (2004), and considering ‘structures’ that can hold spaces for my activities as well as for shifts in how something can be.

There are visual/drawn diagrams<sup>40</sup> as ‘structures’ for spaces, for times, and for works sonic, visual and textual; some of which appear as backgrounds to the research catalogue chapter pages.

This *scaffolding* has included: setting parameters for *gathering*, planning work as ‘experiments’, and mapping elements from a *gathering* space to a showing space - to give an initial outline form<sup>41</sup>, and to shift the spatialities in sound. Transliterating processes I have long used for

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<sup>36</sup> While there may be some similarities between scaffolding’s ‘educational’ use and mine, I am not only thinking about skills or understanding development, but at all of what I am undertaking, and less about supporting the route across a ‘gap’ between what is ‘known’ and what can be ‘learned’.

<sup>37</sup> The need to work within the ‘crip time’ (Kafer, 2013) I can, and that I am severally dyslexic and AuVAST.

<sup>38</sup> Scaffolding: a temporary structure on the outside of a building, used...while building (or) repairing. (OED 2003)

<sup>39</sup> Particularly through an early conference paper, as part of *Early Tests & Experiments*, and in the practice chapters *Dyffryn* and *Coventry*

<sup>40</sup> Sullivan’s diagrams in *Art practice as research; Inquiry in the visual arts* (Sage, 2010) are very informative, but mine are a much lossier ‘holding of a space’ and rough positioning of elements in the growing ‘mosaic’ of the work.

<sup>41</sup> Visiting the Louise Bourgeois show, Nature Studies, Compton Verney, July – October 2024. I was struck by the description of her use of music paper to draw on, the curator suggesting that this was a way to not start work on an empty page, this to me is a *scaffold* for making and doing.

*gathering* and editing video/sound into approaches for theoretical research and writing, and using 'commonplace' structures for writing, as I am using 'right now'<sup>42</sup>. The *scaffolding* supports ways of working in line with the 'care' needed for the nature of the theoretical areas and materials, it is a holding open of a space for things to 'occur', not constricting the 'affect' out of *stuff*, which supports the 'affect heuristic'/embodied processes. It is an exploring of structures and affect to find a symbiosis that 'allows' the praxis to take place, without compressing the affecting qualities out of the resulting 'work'.

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<sup>42</sup> Headings, subheadings, word counts, kanban systems of planning etc...

## Language/text:

Both affect and sound have a difficult relationship with language/text, often described through what makes the sound or how the affect makes you 'feel' (see writing affect in *The Field Survey* and in *Coventry*). Other practice researchers describe similar experiences, as Batey (2023. p10) says 'The terminology of trying to describe in words elements of the creative process has also necessitated an expansion in describing creativity. Experience has shown us how radically different the creative process can be for everyone, generating frustration in communicating'. I often find 'academic' texts do not correlate with my experiencing of the researching, I was *gathering* lots and lots of 'elements', but was struggling to work out ways to bring them together, as Cascella describes: 'over many years I had collected a number of thoughts and materials, but the large knot that I couldn't untangle was "how" to write' (interview between Cascella and Biserna, 2013).

When thinking how to 'write' about sound and affect I have considered the structures and strategies used in *Ordinary Affects* (Stewart, 2007) and *The Hundreds*, (Stewart, Berlant 2019).<sup>43</sup> In the of writing of *Ordinary Affects*, I feel a freedom that I link with my experience of freewriting<sup>44</sup>. This is a process which has 'opened up' how I approach writing; using sound/ imagery from my practice<sup>45</sup>, a word or phrase I keep coming back to, as a starting point, giving myself a duration to write in, then returning to the text produced to edit and work with it (in iterative cycles). The structure from *The Hundreds*, written in word groupings of hundreds, informing my approach to breaking texts down into 'chunks' with wordcounts, that are then movable, (intrinsically linked to all the other) self-contained 'elements' I can work with to construct the 'picture/mosaic'

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<sup>43</sup> Outlined briefly in *The Field Survey*.

<sup>44</sup> I have attended freewriting workshops aimed specifically at ND participants and accommodate my AuDHD/VAST need for things to trigger my 'interest' in particular ways; this along with reading of texts such as 'Cutting our own keys' which describes using 'more liberating' approaches of 'free writing', 'sensory experience', allowing the person to 'travel' within the theme, (while being 'mindful of going off on a tangent, not having a linear narrative, a lack of clarity' (pg:1240) and when revisited, interspersing them with other writing, and refined, the result of the process was still a linear 'coherent' text (their words) have been starting points for my developing of an approach, a rough for a key I can make more my own.

<sup>45</sup> Used at many point, and outlined in parts across the thesis – but particularly evident in *The Dyffryn Book* chapter.

Exploring these 'complications' opens possibilities regarding how one can work with what at first can seem irreducible materials and processes; through this emerges methods of working with and sharing, but there is no straightforward route or answer. I am using multiple approaches: looking at practice thesis examples including Haley Newman's asking questions of 'herself' and the narratives of Elizabeth Price's described through the rolling of masking tape, gave me some ways in. I am looking to share my own *sensed* felt experiencing, tying the reader as closely as possible to my experience, enabling them to 'sit with me' in the process; interspersing first person narrative with gathered *stuff* of theory, using simple diagramming and time (wordcount) based approaches, from my approach to editing sound/imagery. I began to assemble some things, the Research Catalogue helps brings together the different 'registers' of the elements, supporting my communicating of the research undertaken, my understanding of it, and my new knowings. From these I will make a mosaic that holds things enough for it to make 'sense' to another.

## Gathering together:

Contemplating why *gathering* seemed so much better a description than 'taking', I found my way to *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction* (Ursula K Le Guinn, 2019) and have been thinking of ways to work that are not reductive or oppositional. The materials gathered I use as 'themselves'; I am not abstracting them but using them to represent what they are and where they are from (still woven in with what made them 'appear') - a wrangling<sup>46</sup> of ideas and *stuff*. I am choosing' what to use, and constructing with them through my own *sensed* experiencing (and in relation to the 'space' they will go into), so they can still be (quietly) dynamic and shifting; it is a process of addition, bringing things together, making new moments of encounter and experience.

What has developed is a multimodal<sup>47</sup> multifaceted methodology, a *gathering* together of a spectrum of approaches and elements, correlating in my practice to *microelements*<sup>48</sup> of the gathered sound. These can be built into something that includes many 'angles of view' concurrently, giving me a way to better construct something more of the nature of sound and affect, shifting and overlapping, things moving to the fore and back, 'far more than by formed and perceived things. It is a space of affects' (Deleuze, and Guattari, 2004 p479). All the research, including 'theory' writing, requires the same potentials to be active and shifting. I will not be 'using the masters tools' (Walker 2013/2021) but 'cutting my own keys'<sup>49</sup>. (Bertilsdotter Rosqvist, et al. 2023) and building a 'tool kit' for the research (and this 'bodymind'<sup>50</sup>)

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<sup>46</sup> Thinking of wrangling not as a long and protracted dispute, but as a 'rounding up' – bringing together in a temporary grouping.

<sup>47</sup> In the article "what is multimodality" Jeff Bezemer suggests that 'Three interconnected theoretical assumptions underpin multimodality'. To paraphrase, multimodality assumes that: communication always draws on a multiplicity of modes all that contribute to meaning: that resources are shaped overtime to become meaning making resources that articulate the (social, individual/affective) meaning depending on the requirements of different communities: and that people orchestrate meaning through their selection and configuration of modes.

<sup>48</sup> Drawing from what Deleuze and Guattari describe as microperceptions, and Massumi's microshocks – outlined in later chapters.

<sup>49</sup> Not making neurodivergent experiences 'fit' (be neuronormative), but as Bertilsdotter Rosqvist et al. say (p1239) - a (friendly) listening to and acknowledging differences... and... communicate [ing] across neurotypes differently.

<sup>50</sup> It is often suggested that using a range of 'learning styles' and approaches can support neurodivergent learning, but there are also concerns with suggestions that particular 'learning styles' might work in set ways for a diverse 'group', and what works for me today might not tomorrow.

Rethinking and reworking is a process of 'affirmation of other practices, activities and works.' (O'Sullivan, Deleuze, 163). I want my outcomes to be additive and positive inputs; as Barad says, 'In my opinion, critique is over-rated, over-emphasized, and over-utilized, to the detriment of feminism. I believe this research requires a generative, supportive approach<sup>51</sup>, one open to the 'sensing' and 'seeing' of what might be possibly, supported by the New Materialist approach, which shifts us away from 'dualist structures by allowing for the conceptualization of the travelling of the fluxes of nature and culture, matter and mind, and opening up active theory formation'. (Dolphijn & van der Tuin, 2012)

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<sup>51</sup> "Matter feels, converses, suffers, desires, yearns and remembers" Interview with Karen Barad (Dolphijn & van der Tuin, 2012 p 49)

## Onwards: (as voice and text on RC)

*My methods positioned around my 'affect heuristic', situated knowledge and how I draw together the 'gathered' elements, I acknowledge is a subjective approach, which may make it more difficult to open a route for viewer/reader. I hope I have put in enough way markers, held open spaces and for long enough, so that some of this makes 'sense' to another body, made a place which 'invites us to inhabit a shared cognitive environment, where we can (my paraphrasing) gaze on new understandings that we had not noticed before'. (Bertilsdotter Rosqvist et al 2023, p1242) and that you will join me on the journey. I am thinking of this methodology as a crip/neurodivergent feminist praxis, embedded in situated knowledge and new materialism, a following of my 'affect Heuristic' and a utilising of mutable scaffolded to create/support the construction of spaces with the potentials to be smooth<sup>52</sup>.*

*I have conducted this research in accordance with Birmingham City University's policy's concerning researcher integrity.*

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<sup>52</sup> A smooth space being one described as 'filled by events or haecceities, far more than by formed and perceived things. It is a space of affects, more than one of properties.' (Deleuze / Guattari, 2004). mentioned in *Field Survey* and many other points



## Chapter Four

Early Tests & Experiments:<sup>53</sup> developing an approach through praxis.

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<sup>53</sup> Experiments', from the old French esperment "practical knowledge", from ex- "out of" + peritus "experienced" (OED 2004)

## Links text for RC:

This is the first of the 'practice' chapters, in it, as in the following chapters, the practice is interspersed with theoretical concerns and developing approaches. This chapter starts with a micro residency 'grasslands'<sup>54</sup>, and outlines the first steps of this journey through considering the ordinary, everyday and commonplace, work made as part of a recording workshop in Norfolk, the influence of an Ed Atkins work, and how the practice developed further on a recording trip to College Valley. All of which is informed by an emerging affective approach, that considers *gathering*, reflecting on what did not work in materials from a recording trip to Washington State, and the usefulness of *scaffolds* in all this praxis, including writing and presenting a paper on this.

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<sup>54</sup> A project set up by artist Dan Auluk, a series of short artist residencies in a suburban garden, Birmingham, 2015-2018.

(as voice and 'pop up' text on RC)

*"This first of the practice research chapters, is a grouping of test works from four situations/places, interspersed with texts developing concerns that inform the work. This is a journeying through these elements in an outlining of my emerging territory, and my identifying that my understanding would come through 'doing'.*

*I embarked on this period of experimentation, feeling that there was something in the stuff of the everyday sounds around us. I wanted to explore how to gather within our commonplace aural environments using an embodied approach, and with the materials construct 'new' things to be experienced. It was a seeing what would develop through the process while exploring how to work with/for affect across all the research.*

*The 'testing' informed shifts in my approach, recognising that the materials gathered needed to be from/of a space.*

*Exploring bodily, opened correlating spaces between my practice, sensed/felt experience and affect theory.*

*I started to consider ways of 'supporting' the process, through 'scaffolding'.*

*Through reflection, I began to form an approach that could be used, tested and developed further in later work. An instinctual approach, informed by prior practice, emerged and extended through this which became my 'affect heuristic', allowing me to 'work' following felt/sensed experience, and holding in mind things of concern to the research.*

*I began to recognise areas of affect theory that could more specifically inform this research and which I began to link to elements in our soundscapes."*

Grasslands:<sup>55</sup> Birmingham, April 2016, a micro-residency.

Early on in my doctoral research, I undertook a micro-residency with the aim of *gathering* materials and making test pieces to share. I wanted to be thinking through doing, and through that develop what I might do next. My initial approach, a binaural recording technique<sup>56</sup> which would give spatiality in the recording, attaching microphones to myself and recording as I walked through spaces: domestic, garden and the streets nearby. These recordings captured the environments passed through, but the movement made them feel 'transitory'; I wanted something that 'held' my attention, caught me up in a moment.

I tested filming/recording close stills, audio and video. These 'locked off'<sup>57</sup> areas of recording, produced something that felt much more interesting. The materials which I used as they were, just trimming ends - no abstraction in the editing; an area of pathway, the bottom of a hedge, giving an audio visual 'window' through which to 'look'. Within this the commonplace details seemed to jump out in all their specificity. The images subtly shifting and the audio giving context, they felt redolent with affective potential - talking, cars, birdsong, wind - the mundane, every-day, unpredictable *stuff* of the world. These tests gave me a clearer idea of what I was 'looking' for - static materials that 'hold' some of the commonplace and everyday of the spaces and highlighted the importance of researching through/with practice.

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<sup>55</sup> Organised by artist Dan Auluk, a series of short artist residencies in a suburban garden, Birmingham, 2015-2018.

<sup>56</sup> "Binaural field recording opens a portal to an auditory dimension that is as real as it gets. Its techniques and methods transform the act of listening into an enchanting journey through space and time." (spencerbruce, 2023). "Binaural recording mimics the way human ears perceive sound in a three-dimensional space, and comes from the Latin words "bi" (meaning two) and "auris" (meaning ear). Thus, the requirement to record sound using two microphones placed to replicate the ear's position" (Technical information on Binaural recording techniques -DPA microphones)

<sup>57</sup> A locked of or static shot is when the camera does not move during filming. Ed Atkin, whose work I talk about later in the chapter, often utilises variations of this. In *Warm, Warm, Warm Spring Mouths*, (2013-2) the 'frame' of the action does not move, but things move in front of the 'frame', giving a 'window' view onto the world.

## Ordinary/Everyday/Commonplace:

I am considering affecting encounters through the quotidian, the things around us all the time, exploring the *gathering* - the utilisation of these in the artworks I construct. As I noted down thoughts from initial practice tests, I was not quite sure (as is often the case) which word I should use: ordinary<sup>58</sup>, everyday<sup>59</sup> or commonplace<sup>60</sup>. They hold similar, but not identical meaning, denoting things around us that can be overlooked, but, and this is a concern of this research, can non-consciously (Massumi, 1995, p. 85) affect us.

**Ordinary:** is regular, unremarkable, of the usual order of things, it has an always thereness, a consistency.

**Everyday:** is repeated, but the same things may be different on a different 'everyday', linked to time, and as time and space move through us.

**Commonplace:**<sup>61</sup> not unusual, general, that there are places we may have in common. I am intending to put the *stuff* I gather into a commonplace; a place that we can all access and experience, (even if we each understand it differently).

Ordinary affects (along with commonplace and everyday ones) are things of potentials and awakening, 'The question they beg is not what they might mean in an order of representations...but where they might go and what potential modes of knowing, relating, and attending to things are already somehow present in them in a state of potentiality and resonance' (Stewart 2007 p.3). Words for me are elusive, slippery

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<sup>58</sup> late Middle English: the noun partly via Old French; the adjective from Latin *ordinarius* 'orderly' (reinforced by French *ordinaire*), from *ordo*, *ordin-* 'order'. 'usual order', ordinary (adj.) c. 1400, *ordinarie*, "regular, customary, belonging to the usual order or course, conformed to a regulated sequence or arrangement," from Old French *ordinarie* "ordinary, usual" and directly from Latin *ordinarius* "customary, regular, usual, orderly," from *ordo* (genitive *ordinis*) "row, rank, series, arrangement" (source - etymology online)

<sup>59</sup> daily, continual, constant, 'relating to 'time', everyday (adj.) 1630s, "worn on ordinary days," as opposed to Sundays or high days, from noun meaning "a week day" (late 14c.), from every (adj.) + day (n.). Extended sense of "to be met with every day, common" is from 1763. (source - etymology online)

<sup>60</sup> mid 16th century (originally *common place*): translation of Latin *locus communis*, rendering Greek *koinos topos* 'general theme'. commonplace (n.) 1540s, "a statement generally accepted," a literal translation of Latin *locus communis*, itself a translation of Greek *koinos topos* "general topic," in logic, "general theme applicable to many particular cases." See common (adj.) + place (n.). Meaning "memorandum of something that is likely to be again referred to, striking or notable passage" is from 1560s; hence *commonplace-book* (1570s) in which such were written down. Meaning "well-known, customary, or obvious remark; statement regularly made on certain occasions" is from 1550s. The adjectival sense of "having nothing original" dates from c. 1600. (source - etymology online)

<sup>61</sup> I am also quite interested in the idea of A Commonplace book another description of journaling or an older description of a scrapbook, and maybe some of the sort of writing I am doing through my thesis is the writing of 'A Commonplace Book'. A straightforward way of recording a situation, the equipment I used, the decisions I took, what I thought at the time, somewhere to put things and bring them together, so I can consider them as I develop my thinking, consider their affect on me/each other. And that writing thinking of this type of 'space' of notes and bits and gathering together, might work better for me, and allow me to 'gather' thinking as I am gathering materials? Just different types of materials for this research?)

things; they never feel 'hold-onto-able', and so akin to affect. Writing, thinking and doing this research makes me notice this again and again, I am trying to unpick this and consider what works.

As 'some days' I am in my studio, my house, the school of art, some woods, driving in my car and some days I am with people other I am not, 'everyday' is different and everything in everyday has a unique 'thisness' and 'whatness'<sup>62</sup>, so for now I will use that, but I am thinking about ordinary and commonplace.

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<sup>62</sup> Linking to Haecceities/quiddities in the *Coventry* chapter

## Norfolk:

I attended a short sound recording and editing workshop in December 2016 lead by Chris Watson and Jez Riley French, which included practical sessions on equipment use, recording formats, editing and sound design principles.

On the final day, the task was to make a short audio piece. It was a grey drizzly day in the flat landscape; I walked up a lane to a road. Thinking of the 'Grasslands' experiments, I decided to record from a point where there was a tree on the verge where the road dipped, with fields all around, I took a photo. To record the ambiance/atmosphere, I used binaural microphones either side of the tree, a car went past, the recording capturing the spatiality the car approaching, passing, and moving away. I had some wire fence recordings<sup>63</sup> from the previous day at a point very nearby. Back in the building I began working with the sounds, layering up non-concurrent acousmatic sounds from the same place, putting these with the still image.

The outcomes of this technical task was a mix of acquiring new skills and knowledge; I had made something 'of' the landscape, more redolent of the particularity of the space than a single linear recording, recognising the potentials of building with non-concurrent elements from a place. When I shared the piece in the workshop, people said the shifting of the sound 'caught them up in it', with the crows, bleak landscape, an approaching vehicle, the engine audible before it was identifiable, all familiar, and the fence sounds a noise we half know.

Through the early test works, starting to consider how the audio makes a space, and how elements can be 'bodily' experienced, I was learning to work with a greater range of equipment and editing techniques, allowing me to isolate details, and shift elements around in the

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<sup>63</sup> I call these 'fence recordings' probably because Jez Riley French does. They are made by anchoring a contact microphone between a wooden fence post and the fence wire; the mic picks up the sound of the wire moving in the wind; a sound that gives me a sense of distant recognition, it felt like it had the atmosphere of the weather in it.



things I was constructing. I was developing an approach to working, a *scaffolding*, a way of working with affect and these materials, to hold them and make a space within which to work. At this stage, it was as simple as: at a place, gather in a range of ways; when working with the materials layer them; work, follow your nose (an affect heuristic); consider making short tests of audio with still images or 'locked off' video.

## Ed Atkins, Bastards:

In *Grasslands* I link the locked off shot to the work of artist Ed Atkins. In June 2014, several years before starting my doctoral research, I saw their three-channel video and audio installation *Bastards*<sup>64</sup>.

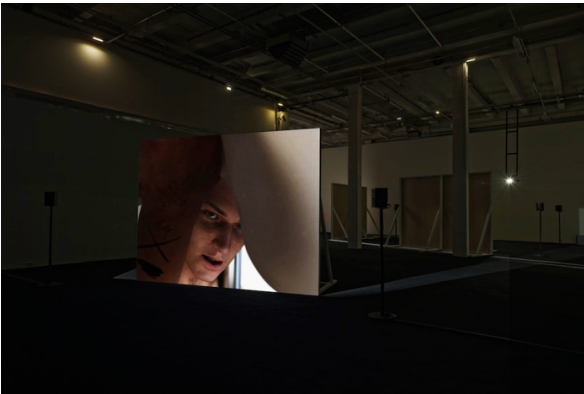


Image credit: Galerie Izabella Bortolozzi.

The imagery in the work *Ribbons*, is a mix of high-definition video with digitally rendered visuals. This I found unreal and hyperreal, mesmerising and disturbing, all at the same time; nothing felt completely specific, yet the images were explicit and involving. Parts recognisable and understandable, but not explained or sequential. The work rolled over me, a wave of singing, speech, chanting, music, and very vivid sharp imagery - the rather tatty grey Palais de Tokyo space accentuating its 'brightness'.

I felt bodily led between the non-specific pockets of *stuff*, doing the work of making links and meanings as nothing felt either closed or complete. The piece would shift, I would shift; I would not quite know where I was - it was some sort of scary, melancholic, worrying and very

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<sup>64</sup> Palais de Tokyo in Paris. 06.06.14 – 07.09.14. 3 large-scale screens with speaker arrays, spaced through an area of the building, with text elements

beautiful – all at the same time. I experienced it as layers and levels of relationships and changing positions. I never felt lost, because everything felt familiar, and I had autonomy to move and shift within it.

I was left with a sense of having participated in something that affected me personally, the experience staying with me, sparking ideas as I considered how I wanted to make work. ‘Bastards’ gave me an impetus to consider the construction of environments<sup>65</sup> and how you set up and give installations ‘space’ so that a viewer can bring in their own self through something that is not narrative<sup>66</sup>.

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<sup>65</sup> Reflecting again later, recognising that the specificity/nonspecificity links to my thinking on the everyday and haecceities/quiddities, this mix of known (if nonconsciously) and the ‘detail’ that draws you in, the way these link us to things previously experienced/memory, which gives us a ‘bodily’ deeper connection with what we ‘meet’, in a bodily way.

<sup>66</sup> There was also something about the text panels at the beginning – with diagrams and notes. Whilst I do not remember the content, there was something of the idea of the artist’s ‘hand’ in the additions, that stayed with me and comes to mind at times when I am thinking about text being annotated (which I have done within ‘this’ again and again).

## College Valley:

I took part in a 5-day field recording trip with Chris Watson and Jez Riley French in Northumbria, June 2017. I planned to record elements of sound (and images) from one area, with the aim to bring them together so they worked in relation to each other - to build an 'environment' and develop what I understood through earlier tests. I was also contemplating the posable use of ambisonics<sup>67</sup> and extending my field recording skills.

I was considering details, smaller sound elements that I could use as 'building blocks'; and linking these to 'microperceptions/ microshocks' (Massumi 2008). I recorded water sounds, insects on flowers, the valley, trying to gather the elements of sounds separately, focusing on the discrete areas of sound. The one-minute short form I had used in Norfolk seemed a useful testing 'structure'. I made three (linked) one-minute 'sky pieces', with different layers of audio. In the first, wind gathered with contact mics on twigs; in the second I added birdsong and the third I added a 'atmosphere'/background recording; to explore how the piece changed with the layering of sound. It was the way that attention shifted, that the 'change' was mind/body noticed, (and noted in audience comments<sup>68</sup>) that added to my thinking and is something to carry forward.

I had an opportunity to record and listen back using ambisonics, I found it too 'absolute', too 'documentary', of less use to my aims of making works of affecting response that the materials I had begun to gather with affect, *stuff* and 'microperceptions' in mind, with these I could change what was more or less noticeable, mediate the materials, share something of my own encounter.

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<sup>67</sup> "Ambisonics - a way of listening to recorded sound that placed you inside a 360-degree sonic sphere, so your ears received information coming from all directions, not just from two speakers in front. That could emulate the natural mechanisms our brain uses to situate us in space, and give us a more convincing, immersive and therefore emotive musical experience." (Gerzon, Into the Sound Field)

<sup>68</sup> The piece shown in a staff show at Birmingham School of Art in January 2019

Reflecting on these early works, I realised their 'framed' views, while initially useful, are 'singular', an image, a (stereo) audio track. They do not 'make spaces' but a 'window'; you 'view' them, you are not in them. I aim to make spaces that shift and move in thought and connections, (thinking of the Ed Atkins piece) and that can elicit bodily encounter. I realised that I needed to utilise my own response to beginning to make spaces of embodied encounter, in my emergent approach.

## Affect as an approach, *stuff* and Microperceptions:

As this enquiry developed, it was becoming evident that my praxis included an embodied approach, that 'What is also needed is a cultivated, patient, sensory attentiveness to nonhuman forces operating outside and inside the human body'. Through these early works 'I have tried to learn how to induce an attentiveness to things and their affects' (Bennett 2010 pxiii) and so be in a position of working with and for affect.

Deleuze and Guattari (2004 p183) and Massumi reference 'microperceptions/shocks' in relation to affecting encounters. Massumi talks of 'shocks', that do not need to be dramatic and that these trigger a bodily response/awareness in a moment This might become a conscious understanding, a recognition, but in those initial moments it is a felt encounter (2008 p8). These bodily nonconscious responses, that hold recognition<sup>69</sup>, are part of my 'affect heuristic', a being physically engaged with spaces and *stuff*.

What do I mean by *stuff*? For me it is 'material to work with'<sup>70</sup>; *stuff* that is disregarded and overlooked, that is there all the time, we feel, but not consciously notice; half-known fleeting encounters with things that are just out of focus. It is *stuff* that makes our bodies (re) act, that "populate every moment of our lives.... a change in focus, or a rustle at the periphery of vision .... an interruption, a momentary cut in the mode of onward deployment of life" (Massumi 2008 p4). It is *stuff* that is enmeshed in, and part of, Massumi's 'shocks'.

I equate microshocks to the small elements of sound, the *stuff* that makes up the acoustic ecologies we inhabit. Relating 'microshocks' and *stuff* as 'bodily notice' and to the layered elements in my short piece 'Norfolk', I am developing my approach; I am *gathering*, collaging and

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<sup>69</sup> I later also consider these in relation to triggering of prior experience/memory.

<sup>70</sup> From the middle English stoffe from Old French estoffe 'material, furniture' (OED 2004)

constructing with *stuff* to create what Massumi might describe as 'intensities' (2008), a felt awareness of an instant, which, transposed and added to other instants builds into a multifaceted sensory 'image'. This feeds into *The Cairngorms* work.

## *Gathering*, not taking – and making ‘something’ out of the quotidian:

Reflecting on the work undertaken so far, I could identify that what I do is ‘collect’ and assemble<sup>71</sup>. I record audio, film, ‘take’ pictures... and there it is, that trick terminology, ‘take’ that goes with capture and shoot. So instead, I keep coming back to ‘gather’. I do not want to own; this is not a using of ‘found objects’; I don’t want to take *stuff* away or capture it. Further to this, I am not ‘setting up’ scenarios to record<sup>72</sup>, or altering (apart from what occurs purely through the act of being there) the space, and I use the materials as they are. They are not representing anything other than ‘themselves’<sup>73</sup>, what I am exploring is the everyday *stuff* around us, aiming to understand our/my affective encounter with this; I am not looking to ‘generate’ things that might be affecting. This is a ‘*gathering* up’, a rematerialising in a different place, and an assembling with.<sup>74</sup>

My notion of *gathering* was brought into focus when reading *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, (Le Guin, 2019). My praxis is one of *gathering* and assembling; a ‘fitting shape of a novel might be that of a sack, a bag.’ (p34); my works are made from the gathered things in my ‘great heavy sack of stuff’ (p36)<sup>75</sup>, things that I gather and work with because they are things that I encounter and hold something for a/my bodily response. Le Guin names her short story after The Carrier Bag Theory of Evolution<sup>76</sup>, the proposition that our society and technologies were not developed because of dramatic events or actions, but through and for the ability to collect, store and gather. “It was hard to make a gripping tale of how we wrested the wild oats from their husks, I didn’t say it was impossible and whoever said writing a novel was easy” (Le

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<sup>71</sup> As I was writing up – realising that this has been across all this research.

<sup>72</sup> As I re-visit this in 2024, recognising that I do affect the sounds and images more than I initially realised, and in *Gathering Closer*, become the maker of the sounds and imagery, but even then, they are of activity that I am undertaking in the writing up of this thesis, so part of my then ‘everyday’.

<sup>73</sup> This approach was in part informed by conversations with Chris Watson, these spanned the amazing qualities of the sounds around us in the environment also the way we react and respond to the, I spoke briefly of ‘affect’, but it was a conversation more about a considering of where the sounds are ‘from’ and a ‘respect’ for their origin.

<sup>74</sup> A note in 2025 - which will of course through that become a new thing and porous to the space and bodies it encounters

<sup>75</sup> Again, recognising later that my works, comes together in temporary, permeable containers, sacks of spaces, with doorways and windows, and the passing through of people.

<sup>76</sup> Elizabeth Fisher’s 1979 Carrier Bag Theory of Evolution argues that, rather than hunting tools, the first cultural device used by humans was probably a carrier bag, which allowed them to transport the vegetables they gathered.



Guin 2019). This is something I have at times felt keenly; it is hard to make a 'gripping tale' (something engaging) of what it sounded like in a space as daily life is happening, but it is not impossible, and I will continue trying.

## A Field Trip to Washington State, April 2018:

I had the opportunity to undertake a field recording trip in Washington State, USA. I wanted to continue to explore the form of the one-minute sound/image piece<sup>77</sup>. I had very limited kit with me, just a simple sound recorder with built in microphones. The works made were not very successful, the sounds all 'merged' and muddy<sup>78</sup>, but this did mean I recognised the need for a more considered approach to recording, that it was not just a *gathering* of everything. I need 'parts' to work with, to layer up 'accretions' of sounds from a *space/place*; understanding this was useful to my planning and future approach.

The short pieces, 'paella', which foregrounds unextraordinary sounds, familiar to many, of cooking with others. This brought my thinking to "What is felt is the quality of the experience... the felt transition leaves a trace, it constitutes a memory. Consequently, it can't be restricted to that one occurrence. It will return." (Massumi 2008 p2), and a beginning to consider memory as a form of embodied, nonconscious, response and something that can inform what I gather and am 'looking' for.

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<sup>77</sup> I thought of these as 'soundcards' and sent some to be part of a group show, 'We don't Talk any More' (Strix gallery, Birmingham, April 2018)

<sup>78</sup> These dense, un-filtered recordings reminding me of how acutely aware I am of sounds around me, as I write this, I can hear my partner running a tap and the water pressure altering in the pipe, a cat jumping off a windowsill onto wooden floorboards. Brown describes "a think-space that has an up, a down, a back, a front: the inner surface of whose sphere is a diorama of urban noise-scenery that vies for and fragments my attention with its perpetually fleeting panorama of moment" (Carlyle, Lane, eds. 2013 p. 95) which is how I auditorily experience all the time.

## Beginning to think about *scaffolds*:

Through these early practice/praxis works, I understood I needed some form of structure or plan for the activities and to support the approach; that this would 'help' in the process of *gathering* and working through my affect heurist/embodied encounter, and give some form to what I was doing until the 'work' began to emerge through the drawing together of elements.

I was additionally aware that I needed to share my journey and what I found along the way. I needed to be able to explicate what 'happened', but as 'this bodymind', I am someone who does not find text easy. I considered strategies I had seen in other practice thesis, particularly Newman's thesis, *Locating performance: textual identity and the performative*. 2001, This was written in 3 volumes, the text in the first a performative self-interview where Newman asks questions of themselves. I can see the use of a 'plan', an approach that makes the doing of these tricky things more possible in this, and at this point myself was considering a 'plan' or *scaffold* as an approach that might support the working with text and the materials. In June 2018, I put a proposal together for a conference paper which was accepted, titled 'this is an of itself is a structure'; it was a film with audio that I spoke over live. In and through it I was thinking about mutable, permeable, *scaffolding* as structures, a 'plan', to hold and allow spaces to open, to support all my working/research, considering the nature of affect, sound and 'me'.

(as voice and 'pop up' text on RC)

*"This early research informed my understanding, linking my doing/experiencing with a growing knowledge of affect theory, and so I began building a picture of things required for the continued developments of the research.*

*My process/methods develop through the doing, a speculative, embodied approach in which my prior knowledge and experiencing the "kind of memory that's directly implicated in any perception, couched in acquired or inbred inclinations and propensities that a body carries forward" (Massumi, 2008, p7) informed my emergent affect heuristic*

*I began to recognise that specific parts of affect theory, particularly 'microperceptions/shocks', are synonymous to that which in our quotidian soundscapes trigger nonconscious response. This begins to inform the research and what it is I might be 'looking' for as I gather. It also supports the notion that these 'elements' are sense/meaning-making materials that I can use to make with potential for embodied encounter.*

*The gathering would be from static points within spaces, and that I needed to 'gather' in ways which gave me clear 'areas' of the sound, so I could work with them without them disappearing, and that to make moments of embodied response to a place/space, I needed to make more of an environment. not something 'looked at'.*

*I could also see that to work with the shifting materials I was looking for, and 'slippy' for me text, I would need some supporting structures that would 'scaffold' all the doing.*

*I would look for 'micropeceptions/shocks' in the future gathering environments, and approached the 'work' through my developing 'affect heuristic'. Spaces opening where the theory and praxis could come together, through a supported place of developing knowledge."*

## Chapter Five

The Cairngorms: research developing through a recording trip, works made, and beginning to make 'spaces'.

## Links text for RC:

This work began with a field recording trip, Murmurations, at the Spittle of Glenshee. Here the ubiquity of water opened a link from Leibnitz (and affect theory) to my developing approaches of *gathering* from multiple points and looking for 'elements' of 'microshocks' (Massumi) in these.

I tested out the making of a space with these gathered *microelements*, and additionally considered my role as an embodied researcher 'in the work' through this process, reflecting on the praxis and work made, and recognising that this is a bringing together of elements.

There were other iterations that gave small insights, but it was the initial piece made that informed significant developments in my knowledge.

(as voice and 'pop up' text on RC)

*"This chapter outlines a gathering trip in the Cairngorms, and a work made with some of that material called 'Shee Water'. The aim, to explore gathering differing element of the sound (and visual) environments around a position, to advance my embodied affect heuristic approach, and to develop this further into the constructing of larger works as spaces.*

*The praxis developing from things understood through 'Early Tests and Experiments', through my entangled activity seeing links between my developing methods for gathering and theoretical ideas of microshocks (Massumi from Leibnitz) as triggers of affecting response. And from this, investigating that some parts of what I gathered may hold elements that help to draw together an atmosphere of the place/space they were from.*

*I develop this material into new test pieces that came together as spaces of (affective) atmospheres; reflection opened through discussions of others experiencing of the work, the developing taking me closer towards my overarching research aim of an understanding of making embodied spaces of encounter.*

*Reflecting on the praxis and work made and integrating the nature of sound and affect brought a recognition that all the praxis is a bringing together of elements, and must embody this being never a singleness."*



## Murmurations, Spittle of Glenshee:

This body of work and research began with a six-day field recording trip with artists Jez Riley French and Chris Watson to the Cairngorms National Park in June 2018. To expand on understanding advanced through *Early tests & Experiments*, I planned to gather materials from a few locations, concentrating on recording in several ways from a specific point at each, at some, potentially returning across the trip. I wanted to have 'clear' 'elements' of sound from each place recorded using a range of techniques and equipment, so I could layer them up and develop what I had learned from the 'Norfolk' piece. I used structures: a map, or parameters, to help bring form to the transitory and shifting elements and 'draw out' the spaces I recorded in, later utilising that 'mapping' as a starting point for how I might construct the spaces I put the elements into.

This trip gave me concentrated time and access to equipment to extend my recording skills and develop my approaches to my *gathering*. It also gave an opportunity to discuss work and approaches with the others there. The recording locations were somewhat arbitrary, not necessarily where I would have chosen to make work about, but this gave the possibility of working with them more dispassionately; I could think more technically and explore techniques and approaches to recording different aspects of the sounds. I 'gathered' at several locations, wood ants in a forest, wildflowers with insects and by a stream. There is a ubiquity of water sounds in the area, so recording by the stream felt very much 'of the environment'.

## Leibnitz in the ubiquities and never singularness of water:

The decision to work with/around the water was in part pragmatic, the sound being so omnipresent in the environment, and the proximity of a stretch of the Shee Water to where we were staying. My recording position was just before a small, arched, stone road bridge, a point where it meandered, faster moving in the centre with shallows over stones at the edges, giving access to a wide range of water sounds. I was 'looking' for the many-faceted and fluctuating multitude of *microelements* of sound to gather and then work with. Water as is sound, is ever-moving and shifting, mingling and merging.

Leibnitz outlines petit perceptions through the sounds of the ocean, describing it as being made up of a multitude of smaller sounds. a common with my *microelements*, these 'little' sounds are a grain of sand hitting another, a water droplet hitting a stone. Lambert (2013 p. 89) describes this, saying Leibnitz 'uses the example of the sound of the wave. Although we hear that sound, we do not precisely distinguish each drop colliding into one another. If those micro-collisions were not providing a sound however, we would not hear the sound of the wave globally.' This concept of a 'microperception' as elements of what becomes a global sound, informed my thinking when trying to record the many points and parts of the sounds of water<sup>79</sup>. 'The mind must be slowed to catch the million transformations of the water, on sand, on shale, against driftwood, against the seawall. Each drop tinkles at a different pitch' (Shafer 1994, p16), which is redolent of Masumi's 'manyness' of affect, linking them as multifaceted and multitudinal in form.

I recorded over three days at *The Shee Water*, reviewing and reflecting as I went along, *gathering* in different ways at each visit - under the water's surface with a hydrophone, sounds of pebbles and stones being moved, sounds of the water's surface splashes with a parabolic

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<sup>79</sup> Trying to get 'parts' of the sounds of water, particularly pertinent as the sound from running water can easily become white noise.

microphone<sup>80</sup> - testing out approaches to gather different parts of the sounds. My aim, to gather *microelements* and to then 'construct', 'compose', 'orchestrate' them into new moments of event.

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<sup>80</sup> A parabolic microphone uses a parabolic reflector to collect and focus sound in much the same way as a satellite dish. Used for isolating sounds, recording sounds at a distance or to record very small sounds.

## Microperceptions:

'Microperceptions' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004) or Masumi's 'microshocks' inform/trigger bodily response and are parts of what make affect occur. These do not have to be dramatic; microshocks are the things 'that populate every moment of our lives....a change in focus, or a rustle at the periphery of vision' (Masumi 2009 p3). These shifts of attentions, interruptions, are not consciously noticed in themselves, but we are aware of the affect, as the 'concept of affect is tied to the idea of modulating occurring at a constitutive level where many somethings are doing, most of them unfelt. Or again felt only in effect' (Masumi 2009 p4). In our moments of being aware of 'its' effect on our bodies, we want/need to turn and look or flinch, these things that "act upon us" and "make us act".

Singularly, *microelements* may not represent or tell us much, but when combined, a 'picture', an atmosphere, builds up and begins to emerge, just as the sea is the sound of many drops, pebbles, bubbles etc.. Leibnitz also describes the sound of crowds of people; sound happens because something active, an event, occurs. This is made of many small parts, generating affects in the bodies of those who are part of them. No event or response can be static or the same; these are moments in time that cannot be repeated. We do 'remember', and then these things can be 'reactivated' in us at other moments. I consider my *microelements stuff* of our everyday sound ecologies that cause 'microshocks'; things we encounter, experience and respond to, opens an approach for *gathering* and informs what to gather. Adding to this that these *microelements* can be constructed into a 'picture' which has potential for 'an event' to occur and might bring us to memory; opens up a combined new approach for my *gathering*, and to making spaces of embodied encounter.

I see a strong link between the description of 'microperception' that Masumi gives us as non-conscious and on the periphery of awareness and how we experience our everyday aural landscape, how it non-consciously informs us regarding the world around us. When I was first

learning about spatial sound recording, it was suggested I swap around my headphones, experiencing the audio of the space 'back to front', and even though the visual information told me that something was dropped to my right, I looked left. Goodman describes sound in the context of 'microperception' and relating to 'pre-cognition' and a 'wholly bodily' response; he uses the example of a wasp in a pitcher plant and its response to 'microperception' of a resonant frequency of sound, triggering the release of pollen, a '.... sound-as-vibrational force coursing through ecologies at pre-subjective, pre-content and pre-contextual levels' (Goodman 2013 p3).

Sound is a physical thing, the movement of molecules, a traveling as others are 'moved'. This physical, bodily process links very closely to Leibniz's descriptions of petit perceptions; but sound is not only that (and maybe other) physical sensation/s, it is also what we make of those. My process is centred in my personal bodily response as a subjective crip/neurodivergent 'bodymind'.

## The making of a 'space':

In July 2018 there was basement space at Birmingham School of Art made available for the testing and discussion of work in progress. I wanted to use this opportunity to put together a larger piece, further investigating knowledge from *Early Tests & Experiments*; that for there to be potentials for embodied affective response, the interaction of multiple elements is required, and the set-up should be one where the 'audience' is not an external viewer. Furthermore, that I would work heuristically with the gathered materials, bringing (*micro*)elements together to construct a space using several channels of audio and video, developing the work through my response to what happened in the process.

I had not previously set up audio through a speaker array that I could edit 'live'. Doing this allowed me to work 'in the moment'; employing an exploratory approach of not trying to 'recreate', but to construct something that felt redolent of my layered experience of the Shee water. This felt an appropriate way of working, constructing a space of encounter, through being in it and experiencing. I set the equipment up around a table on which were my laptop, and a notebook containing my diagrams and thoughts from the recording trip. I could listen to the array as I worked, a very particular set up with 'me' at the centre. I experimented with the positioning of: speakers, projectors, the speaker tracks were assigned to, and altered elements and volume in tracks; until I felt I had the beginnings of a 'space'. There were 6 audio channels/speakers and 3 video projections<sup>81</sup>. Through the process I considered/held in mind how microshocks might occur through the bringing together of smaller 'elements', and that these might make 'something' of affect.

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<sup>81</sup> The set up was an up-and-down steam video on the right and left with the speakers for those audio tracks on the desk, base sounds from under stones from speakers to the left-hand side on the floor, and a projection of film from the ground next to where I had recorded at the side of the stream. There were hydrophone/underwater recordings under the table and sounds from above the water's surface on speakers pointing higher up.

Working with the snippets and glimpses of *microelements* in the channels of audio and video, exploring the shifting and movement in relation to each other, 'I constructed a place, I channel a presence, as a frayed palimpsest of notated experiences, anticipations, recollections' (Casella in Carlyle and Lane 2013 p85). The 'desk' was the middle point from which to experience the work; people sat in 'my seat' and 'became' me, had view of the software, my notebook, pencil, and coffee cup<sup>82</sup>, or they sat and stood 'in' the projected flow of the water; I was residually still 'there'.

The discussion around my piece was very informative, allowing me a moment of critical distance, to see the work as the 'audience' did and reflect. We discussed: the audience being 'me'; that the set up made a sort of 'expanded diagram'; that as everything was visible there was no 'magic'; and that the positioning under a window meant you could hear the street and the traffic behind and above you, with the stream in front and below, putting the 'viewer' in a liminal space, between the commonplace day-to-day of the city and outdoor space with water - 'the seeping edge of the virtual' (Masumi 2002 p43), in the porous surfaces of the soundscape. There were comments regarding the light of the projections in a semi lit space being a bit like wading in water, and that shutting your eyes meant being taken to this other place, but with eyes open the space felt dystopian, the materials from a bright sunny day in a semi-dark basement.

Putting the audience in a position of experiencing 'as me', as a way to share my encounter is very apposite. The *gathering* trip, and this making and sharing of work, where 'immersive interaction carrying over into reflection and speculation towards new understandings (Gray and Delday 2011 p4). I began to understand, through the 'doing' of the making of the piece, my own opportunity to reflect, and the comments of others, the importance of: the spatiality gathered in the audio to 'carry' a sense of environment, my layering and mingling of *microelements* to create affecting atmospheres, and my place in this as an embodied active researcher

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<sup>82</sup> I later again used these sorts of additional 'elements' in works, residues of my presence and actions, as part of the exhibitions, including my VIVA exhibition.

## Bringing things together, the never singleness, activeness and event in the practice:

My thinking was coalescing, I had begun to describe what I am aiming to 'gather' as *microelements*, thinking of this as *stuff* that is a part of microshocks, that initiates so our bodies 'act' and re-act. I am looking for *microelements* that are parts of the auditory ecologies that are around us all the time and non-consciously inform us about our environment. So my *microelements* of *stuff* are parts of or closely akin to what Massumi describes as microshocks<sup>83</sup>, which come from Leibnitz's Monadology petit perceptions and are described thus, 'there are hundreds of indications leading us to conclude that at every moment there is in us an infinity of perceptions, unaccompanied by awareness or reflection' (Leibniz 1996, p53).

In this work in the Cairngorms, I was aiming, through my 'affect heuristic', to gather sound from one point/location but many angles and approaches, considering the multifaceted and active nature of affect, and the manyness of its forms' (Massumi 2009 p3). Through working in this way 'The concept of micro-perception places the emphasis clearly on the act of combining an enactive relational process and the potential – the virtual inherent within this process – rather than on the perception of somehow individual 'completed' sounds (a representational process)' (Goodman 2013 p11). These *microelements*, can, as parts I construct with, have the potential to activate and make spaces of what Massumi might describe as an intensity, and I describe as an affecting atmosphere.

In the test work *Shee Water* I was investigating the bringing together of elements - gathered *microelements*, the table, equipment, the space and its wide environment, taking the materials from a representation/recording to a new and active situation. Transitions, shifts and changes are 'felt'; it is in part these sorts of qualities that I am 'sensing for' as I work, exploring how things come together, in a dynamic situation, bringing the theory into play with the material as I work, so that otherbodies might experience affect.

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<sup>83</sup> And Deleuze and Guattari describe as microperceptions.



The Atkin's piece *Bastards* (2014),<sup>84</sup> is an assembly of generated images and sounds that cuts and shifts, partially lets you see into a space, whilst opening another. I was affected by my encounter with the work; I carry it with me. Bodies carry forward with us understanding from previous experience; this "... cannot be but a layered construction of all the thoughts and words and sounds that have been me....my every now, with its load of thens crashing into it" (Casella in Carlyle and Lane 2013 p85) and meeting 'together' in a space, always in flux. Massumi says 'What is in question is precisely the emergence of the subject, its primary constitution, or its reemergence and reconstitution. The subject of an experience emerges from a field of conditions which are not that subject yet, where it is just coming into itself.' (2009 p. 4). Like the *microelements* coming together in the works I construct, they are also coming together in my thinking through the doing. The potentials of this bringing together of many elements to "form an affecting entanglement", which makes an event, reveals possibilities of remediating, taking a gathered sound from a "moment" and putting it with others in a different "moment", building an experience out of other experiences.

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<sup>84</sup> Described in *Early Tests & Experiments*

## Other iterations made with the materials:

There were other iterations of this work; a track '*Shee water*' #2 July 2018, a restaging '*Shee water*' #3 at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire November 2018. These helped me clarify further some thoughts from the initial iteration: the track making it clear I wanted to make an 'environment' that you could physically be in; the restaging the importance of the space and positioning of the materials. The space, which was in a public area of the building near a café, changed daily across three days of reflecting and testing out different set ups; it was useful to recognise that the sounds of a space could be 'too much' for my work, but that you can still construct 'moments' when people might 'step into' (or sit down within) what you have made and shift somewhere else. Ultimately, however, the material didn't feel 'with' the new space they were in – they always felt separate, bringing me to an understanding of the balance required.

(as voice and 'pop up' text on RC)

*"In the Cairngorms, I immersed myself in the auditory environment and gathered water sounds around, above and below the surface, later working with these to construct a space of encounter. Water links 'microperceptions' (Leibnitz/Massumi) and my microelements of sound, as things that have potential as triggers of affective response.*

*Through the gathering and constructing I was working with my affect heuristic bodily engaged approach, and through the activity, reinforcing my intimate involvement in the doing and knowing, and developing my understanding of my embodied praxis methods.*

*I explored constructing a space within a space, the links and seepage between them, developing my knowledge and my approach to later works.*

*I could clearly see the usefulness of the permeable structures/scaffolds I was using to help me to work with these types of materials, especially to support my subjective and embodied part in the process. I utilised mapping of elements between the spaces, my aim to make a space that the audience did not view, but were in. This was successful; feedback from informal discussion included comments such as 'feeling in the middle of the work and the stream'. Discussing and reflecting informing how the research would develop.*

*This period of exploration, making evident that 'microperceptions'/microelements have potentials for an active event of affecting encounter to occur, and that working with these, and the space, meant I had constructed something that people 'responded' to, not as a documentation of where the materials were from, but as a new space of encounter.*

*Important developments occurring across all the process, which itself informed my developing understanding that this 'all' is a multifaceted bringing together of elements in relation, so they can mingle and together make something new."*

## Chapter Six

Dyffryn: A site of speculative research and exploring permeable boundaries.

## Links text for RC:

The site, a National Trust property, was one I could revisit, early on photographing as a means of exploring the spaces (images of site on RC). This was a speculative approach to *gathering* through my affect heuristic and making test works, through an iterative praxis developing my methods and understanding. The opportunity of two short residencies in a gallery informed and progressed the development of approaches to making spaces; and through reflecting on the first iteration, the second evolved.

Talks and papers were developed as part of this body of work<sup>85</sup>, which fed into future activity and understanding of ways of explicating the research.

Work was 'halted' due to Covid, and the planed final exhibition did not take place, but I did later revisit the materials, which is outlined in chapter nine *The Dyffryn Book*.

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<sup>85</sup> I gave a talk about the project, for The Humanities Research Group at Newman University in February 2020, and a presentation to MA Fine Art students at BCU in 2022, I additionally co-presented a paper with dramaturgist and academic Kate Katafiasz, for the Sound, Voice and Music Working Group at the 2023 TaPRA conference, themed 'Encountering (im)materiality and community through sound, voice and music', my parts of our paper, '*Permeable surfaces, edges, and collective entanglement*' is links to knowledge developed through this research, and the later making of the book. Making papers and presentations helped me clarify my thinking and informed my developing approach to writing/explicating my new knowledge. This approach of talks, presentations and papers has been an essential part of my 'scaffolding' approach/methodology to textual and 'disseminating' activities. Parts of those talks were developed into the chapters, and informed my approach to constructing this thesis.

(as voice and 'pop up' text on RC)

*"I was looking for a site to work with that involved significant human activity.*

*I approached Dyffryn House and Gardens. I knew the grounds when I was a child, as a park, and put in a proposal which was accepted by The National Trust who had recently taken over the site. This was for a residency through 2018 – 2020 which would culminate in an exhibition.*

*The timeframe and site gave the potential for repeated visits over an extended period, permitting reflection and revisiting to further test evolving approaches, and allowing me to explore the way that the spaces changed across seasons and over time.*

*I used simple 'scaffolds' through much of this work - the extended time, gaps between visits (other sites/exhibitions worked with) and the speculative approaches, necessitated plans and supports to gathering, making test pieces and keeping notes. In the making of the installation works, I used these 'scaffolds' for the transposition of spaces from the gathered to the showing.*

*Through early tests, my approach to gathering on/with a site developed; there were important advancements in working with the porosity of sound and space in the gathering and making of pieces, and I recognised that longer works gave a greater opportunity for engaging, and that images could link a viewer 'into' the pieces.*

*These advances fed into the 'installations' in the STRIX residencies, and the two shows allowed for reflections and further progressions in the work/research.*

*The final exhibition at STRIX was a porously entangled space of known/unknown, then/now and here/there, allowing for viewers to bring things of themselves into the work, and affect it, while being in the liminal space that holds potential for affective embodied encounter."*



## The site:

As a child I had visited the grounds at Dyffryn as a public park; the house had been a conference centre. When The National Trust took over the site, the house was very run down. The grade 1 listed gardens the main attraction, with 'garden rooms', kitchen gardens, glasshouses, a stumpery, rock gardens, meadows and an arboretum. The house, dishevelled, with only two floors that the public could (part) access; many of the corridors bare plaster with plyboard floors and only fragments of former grandeur - some silk wallpaper here, a huge fireplace there.

During preliminary visits I met staff and volunteers, house conservators, gardeners, and archivists; there was much to explore and consider<sup>86</sup>. I realised its historic associations were not what was looking for<sup>87</sup>, that I needed to consider the site through the frame of my research question, its current everyday and commonplace, and in these what affective encounters might occur.

In February 2018, I undertook some initial *gathering*, setting up sound recorders and leaving them running while photographing details in the house before the public arrived, hoping to be just out of 'earshot'. On reviewing these, 'noticing' concurrent activities in an audio recording from the top floor, a fly (one of the many nonhuman users/inhabitants of the space) buzzing and bouncing off a window that I had attached a pair of transducer/contact microphones to, and visitors outside below picked up through the vibrations of the glass. I additionally had a recording with a standard microphone from this room, with the sounds of birds outside and public inside the house. Using parts of these two audio recordings and a photo, I made a short 1min test piece. The sound has particular qualities due to the transducers; it is sort of

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<sup>86</sup> The archives stored much of the site's historic industrialist family ownership and its use through the later 20th century as a study and conference centre. Materials from when the grounds, through the time of municipal control, had been a park and a site for events, such as outdoor theatre, and music. The observatory, run by a group of volunteers, was fascinating. There were images and glimpses into things that had taken place, a visit by Gandhi, an eclectic art collection, a plethora of materials and information.

<sup>87</sup> I was not interested in its historic or contemporary associations and links, but in it as a building and grounds in a state transformation between disrepair and renovation, it being a 'visitor attraction' also of interest, as this meant it had activity and purpose as a site in very particular ways. I had been interested to see how it had changed. Some of the 'garden rooms' had been reinstated in the previous decade, and the house and gardens felt like many spaces linked by passageways and corridors. I think my interest in the site as somewhere to gather, was in part because these spaces felt in flux, and as I had previously spent time there, I had an internal memory sense of the outdoor spaces, even though I could not recall them in detail.

blurred, and the fly comes in and out of 'focus', with a busy but indistinct hubbub and voices. This first test, made of in/outside and the shifting movements of details and atmospheres, already developing potentials for and new understanding of the creation of affecting active pieces.

## Affect heuristic – sense(ing)observer:

My process of *gathering* and making is a being-open-to my own affective response to the sorts of everyday, general, nondramatic things that make us shift or move, look and be aware, ‘a rustle on the periphery of vision, that draws a gaze towards it’ (Massumi 2009 p4). Things that activate prior commonplace experiences we have had, ‘the ordinary is a thing that has to be imagined and inhabited. It’s also a sensory connection. A jump.’ (Stewart 2007 p127) These part-known, *sensed*, felt reactions, are almost like déjà vu, moments of frisson, things that makes the hairs stand up on my arms in recognition. As *microelements* have the potential to trigger affective response (outlined in *The Cairngorms* chapter), through my ‘affect heuristic’ I was looking for *microelements* of the everyday, along with shifts and changes linked with these affecting ‘rustles’ at Dyffryn. *Stuff* that, when I listened back, made me stop, look over, notice, but in the moment not consciously knowing why.

There is a commonality between my approach Vertov’s notion of a kino-eye<sup>88</sup>:

“The machine- eye, (which) moves in a perpetual metamorphosis—a discontinuous movement of bodies—rendering sensible new matter, new affects, and new forces. Thus, in the intensity of the first cinematic images, the world is shaken and seems to lose its solidity and stability. In this becoming of bodies, the kino-eye captures their intensity, their incorporeal element (Lazzarato 2019 p.21)

Working with my affect heuristic, I am trying to gather ‘intensities’, not of human bodies, but of spaces/places and their ‘incorporeal elements’, opening myself up to being aware, *gathering microelements* of situations and places, to render ‘sensible’ (new) affects. With further correlations in the describing of an approach where screenplays are not used, as they do not show us the world, instead structures and systems of editing are utilised in a montage approach, Vertov ‘realises’ that such an approach needs to be one of “Life Caught Unawares”

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<sup>88</sup> I had watched ‘Man with a Movie Camera’ (1929, Dziga Vertov) previously and rewatched it while I was reading and thinking.

(p26) and that this 'requires cineobservers who produce cineobservations and cineanalyses within the framework of a poetic cinema" (p28). I use a speculative/affect heuristic approaches with a *scaffolding*, to 'hold' a space in which to work, and am, in my process, a 'sense(ing)observer, utilising my 'bodymind' responses to what is around me and the materials I work with.

My approach intrinsically linked to my 'bodymind' and its non-linear way of being, knowing and experiencing, and through this to make spaces "that, as in Bergson, provokes circuits of ideas within memory and opens the possibility of breaking down thoughts directly—without passing through linguistic semiotics—upon the screen in the spectator's brain (Lazzarato 2019 p29). It involves linking affect, memory and experiencing, as felt *sensed* things that make us recognise and 'know', and occurs outside linguistics. Vertov thinks that his work is "beyond the author" (p32) while I am absolutely in all of what I do<sup>89</sup> through my embodied response, therefore I am absolutely 'in' all the 'doing'. With no notion that mine is an objective documentary approach looking for the 'truth' of a situation, this is a *gathering* up and sharing of my experiencing<sup>90</sup>.

The *stuff* of the world around me, all its small and insignificant bits, catches my attention in an encounter of intensities, details, shift and distraction, happening en-masse and rolling into each other. I pay it attention all the time, my hyper-awareness sometimes experienced as pressure from the sounds and visuals constantly experienced, not always from choice. But it means I notice the little quotidian things tangled up with the bigger; this *stuff* excites me, makes me feel alive; I am a wholly embodied researcher/gatherer/maker; this is a 'whole' body (not only somatic) approach, utilising the particularities of this/my 'bodymind'. This links to Lacanian extimacy, through a breaking down of the binary notions of subjectivity. In the process, through the *gathering*, the working with and the sharing, I am externalising something

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<sup>89</sup> Sometimes, akin to 'Man with a Movie Camera' where you see the cameraman, you can hear me, my actions and movements in the works I make.

<sup>90</sup> With an understanding that when another 'bodymind' sees, hears and experiences my work, and feels something - reacts, has a moment of encounter with it - it is their own moment of encounter, that only that 'bodymind' can have.

internal/intimate, I am making the works I do because I am using processes that are 'of' me. I open myself up to be a permeable 'thing' as well as allowing for the permeability of the materials and spaces I work with.

## Speculative testing and developing methods informed by and informing praxis:

The work at Dyffryn was across a longer timespan than the other sites of *gathering*. It began with a not knowing what I might find - a speculative open approach; it could be responsive and situation-orientated research - continuing to develop<sup>91</sup> a subjective, response-driven approach through the praxis experiencing of the spaces, *gathering*, reviewing materials, making test works, reflecting and revisiting. A looking for *stuff*, *microelements* of the *space/place* in sound and images, that tickled my affect 'nose', with the intention to understand the affective dimensions of the sounds I was experiencing/*gathering* and how I might work with them to build new spaces/encounters. The early 'Top Floor' test helped me recognise what I was looking for.

Reviewing early recordings, I noticed sounds of myself moving away from the equipment and sounds from the terrace below as people began to come onto the site; although similar to the 'Top Floor's' in/outness, these additionally caught transitional active points of arrival and occupation. I became very aware of the permeability of the spaces, through windows, corridors, stairways and floors and walls, as well as bodies present – including mine. Reflecting on my own 'encounter' with these everyday materials, becoming cognisant that these 'atmospheres' of permeability (which might be described as wider unseen 'views') are important to my developing methodology and approach as an embodied researcher.

I decided to actively look for points of permeability and details in the makeup of a space - a fly, drips and creaks etc.; *stuff* not necessarily in view (in the frame) in an image, but 'from around' what is. These inform an experiencing of shifts and changes in atmospheres, and 'being aware but not seeing'; moments of things non-consciously (but affectively) *sensed*, and as such elements that I can utilise in the construction of my art works as spaces of potential bodily encounter for others.

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<sup>91</sup> I was beginning to develop a description of my approach, thinking of it as overlapping and intersecting methods coming together. A speculative, crip/neurodivergent, feminist, new materialist, praxis - utilising mutable structures to support the developing/development of thought and hold open space for working with and through affect.

I outlined a 'structure' for research visits - four days each season - across multiple spaces and times of day. I devised a simple 'plan' for working: arrive early with the staff and before the public, have an area in mind, spend time to 'see' what seemed of potential interest in the space. Then, set up recording equipment, *gathering* audio with a range of microphones, collecting still and moving images, and making notes and diagrams. The grounds opened at 11am and the house at noon; I gathered the space and activity before, across people coming on site, and once the spaces had become busy; looking for the elements outlined above. Illustrated in the short test 'Pool Room'<sup>92</sup>, there is moving image (a locked off shot) and audio from above and below the surface of the water. The test piece is sparse and gentle, sounds from under the water, the breeze in a hedge and birds. There is a permeability between the contained image and the 'wider view' of the audio, and in this case also between the above and below of the pool surface. (This piece ends abruptly at 1min long, the restrictions of this very short form began to feel too limiting, informing the move towards making longer pieces).

I made further tests, '*summer*' (1min20secs), which was still shortform, and to explore the potential of something longer made '*Grasslands*' (7mins). The works are both audio with a still image, and are made with materials gathered on the same day and location. There are many similarities: a close view image, close recordings of insects, more distant birdsong, people and activity on the site. '*Grasslands*' has 'more in it': an aeroplane, people talking, and laughter. This gives a broader sense of the atmosphere of the place, its activities, and how they constantly shift and change; opening a potential for 'stepping' into the space of the work, wanting to hear more, explore what is happening.

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<sup>92</sup> From a November visit, gathered in one of the garden rooms, which has a shallow rectangular pool and hedges around. The day was mild and dry, with a light breeze; I set up microphones in a hedge, a camera looking at some allium seed heads, another camera looking at the surface of the pool, and a sound recorder with hydrophones under the water. Sound travels very well through water, so in shallow water you can hear sounds from above the surface as well as below.

I began developing longer pieces, including *'Wood'* (10mins) made with materials gathered at the edge of the arboretum. This again has a close image, a 'locked off' video shot, with light and insects slowly moving and shifting. The audio is sparser and more spatial, I tried to work into it a sense of people exploring the stumpery, moving around the paths. This is the most successful of these test pieces, constructed between the materials from and of the space and the experiencing through this 'bodymind'.

Working through embodied praxis, I became aware of significant developments to my approach and understanding. Firstly, that the longer duration allowed for a space to open in the works I constructed, through details and permeable 'atmospheres', for a (felt)sensing of nonconscious and affective experiencing of moments; secondly recognising, as an artist, the importance of the images in making a way in for another to experience their own embodied encounter with my works.



## Elements #I & #II, STRYX Gallery Birmingham, May & June 2019:

In May and June 2019, I developed two exhibitions at STRYX Gallery in Digbeth, Birmingham<sup>93</sup>. For each, the exhibition was developed over a two-week residency in the space and was open to the public for a week. I worked speculatively, with and in the space of the gallery, to explore bringing together (*micro*)*elements* gathered at Dyffryn to make affecting atmospheres and spaces. I was considering the permeability between the sites of *gathering* and showing, thinking through the doing, the iterative shows allowing for testing, reflecting and further developments.

The space is a 1<sup>st</sup>-floor ex-industrial unit. The white painted main area has windows along one side looking onto a road, with a doorway opposite leading to stairs, and an additional darker alcove area painted grey, away from the windows. I had a range of projectors, speakers and screens, and tables, supports and surfaces on which to put equipment, project or print. In the shows I titled the 'elements' individually according to location and date of *gathering*.

My aim was to explore the making of spaces of embodied encounter, utilising the developments in my approaches through the previous tests and works. I had been able to gather a greater range of materials at Dyffryn than at other sites; the gathered sound reflecting the site's permeable 'boundaries' - the seepage present, the promiscuity of sound, relating to the shifting and moving described by Massumi and linking with the nonconscious 'knowing' of something - that is an affecting encounter.

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<sup>93</sup> Each show, opened for a week, following a two-week development residency in the space. I was sharing the space with another artist, Kirsten Adkins, we were making separate works, but to be shown together. I will only describe my work in this text. The show was titled. *Elements and* was exploring the bringing together of elements in a space.

I constructed through accretions of materials, working with the close and the heard-through, as well as the audio ecology of the 'gallery', making longer pieces with multiple elements, creating possibilities for moments and situations to mingle and merge, utilising images as a way into a (always) new 'space' of encounter for the viewer. I made notes as I went along, as I had on visits to the site - commonplace thoughts and discussions in the space - to consider later in the putting together of texts.

The first iteration:

I began by thinking about the permeability of the edges, seasons, rooms, buildings and imagery, that I had been *gathering* in the materials and employed in the tests pieces made, I put some of these tests into the space, considering the everyday differences in how sounds move depending on season - the amount of foliage on trees, different buzzings of insects, changes in the activities on the site; you can hear these differences between the 'grassland/summer' and the 'wood' piece from autumn.

I had gathered materials in Florence's room over several visits<sup>94</sup>, seasons, and times of day. The recordings from this space included seepage from the house filling with visitors, things happening on the floor below, people moving around and playing the piano, and through the windows, sounds from the gardens and terrace below<sup>95</sup>. Exploring putting elements of these together, revealed that they were full of shifting, moving sounds, meeting and merging "atoms" (maybe my *microelements*?): "They are autonomous not through closure but through a singular openness. As unbounded "regions" in an equally unbounded affective field, they are in contact with the whole universe of affective potential,

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<sup>94</sup> Florence, the daughter and sister of the more well-known Cory father and son, was the member of the family who lived in the house for the longest and ran it as a single woman, at a time when this was 'unusual'. Florence's bedroom on the first floor has a corner position and dual aspect windows, from one side looking out over the terrace at the back of the house and across the lawns, the other a view to the side of the house overlooking the grand rockery. It additionally has doorways in the remaining two walls, one to a dressing room which then leads to the landing, and the other to a corridor that joins the landing.

<sup>95</sup> The ceiling below the room was too delicate to allow visitors to enter, but I had access to set up sound recorders and cameras, these actions of mine appearing in the gathered materials, and so in 'Florence's room'.

as by action at a distance.” (Massumi 2002 p.43). Sounds acting as affect might be described, echoing my experiencing of Florence’s room, as an accretion of affecting moments, layers of sounds that would build an atmosphere of the space within the exhibitions, that might catch a visitor in a moment, make them linger.

The works coalesced into areas of outside and inside. Materials from Florence’s room in the more contained and darker grey area, audio gathered across different days, with two projections of windows from the room. These made a ‘space’, with audio that mingled at the border with the sounds of the wider space and further. The bright projections enhanced the windows being full of light, but the space felt dark, too theatrical and ‘dramatic’ for the much ‘quieter’ sounds and images. As both the gallery and Florence’s room were on the first floor, when you heard the sounds through the house it felt like they could be coming from the floor below. Opposite the gallery windows were materials from the gardens, a projection of ‘*Grasslands*’, a screen showing ‘wood’, printed images and audio from spring and summer visits; these were smaller in scale and the sounds quiet by nature.

The opening night was noisy, the sound elements did not hold up well, drowned in the hubbub of the activity. This made me very aware that my work ‘works better’ in a quieter space; visitors in the following week engaged with the works quietness. Painter and academic Yvonne Hindle visited, commenting on ‘*Florence’s Room*’ that its details, shifts and movements took you from thinking of it as from other place, to “being in this place, making me feel very present and in the moment”. This echoed my thinking about noticing drawing you to memory while at the same time making you more aware of where you are ‘now’. Another successful outcome, was that you could hear parts of the audio on the stairs to the gallery space, encountering it before you were fully in the space, this, along with the feeling of a ‘space’ and the permeability of sounds between that and the exhibition space, are things I developed further in the next iteration, were subsequently utilised in the work in *Coventry* and I aim to demonstrate in my VIVA show.

## The second iteration:

Building on the first show, I worked with the materials from Florence's room, deciding to work in the larger space and echo the window images from Dyffryn with the gallery windows. Using this *scaffold* of the transposition of the layout from one space to another, gave me a simple starting point from which to explore the audio's spatiality further. The second iteration came together as three (5m) droops of paper, with a window image printed on each, roughly conforming to the position they were from and around 2m from the windows in the space, so that the layers of windows highlighted each other. There were a set of speakers positioned on the floor where each piece of paper rolled up.

This work shifted the significance to the audio<sup>96</sup>. Tracks had no beginning or end points, and were of differing lengths, meaning you always meet elements from tracks in different combinations: "whether past or future, inside or outside, transcendent or immanent, sublime or abject, atomized or continuous - is in a way a matter of indifference. It is all these things, differently in every actual case" (Massumi 2002 P43); this emulated sounds shifting and changing nature. The spatiality of the recordings meaning they met and merged with the audio ecology of the space. People moving below and the piano being played (Dyffryn) mixed with people moving around in this building; the sounds from the grounds (Dyffryn) mingled with the sounds from the street outside.

This unsolid *stuff*, which is intrinsically 'active', 'always an event of difference, and so disrupting continuums. As always a parasitic act that diffracts' (Goodman 2013 p6). As it moves and interacts it constantly affects and is being affected, not only with/by the 'environment' but with/by the bodies met; "The transmission of affect means that we are not self-contained in terms of our energies. There is no secure

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<sup>96</sup> Again, there were problems with audio at the opening, the crowd was very noisy, and the work not. I had asked for a 'quiet' opening, but this did not happen; I need to consider this, but think it might always be an issue, as I do not want to turn the volume up, make it shout. At earlier, quieter points, it worked well with the sounds of people moving through, speaking, stopping, shifting and you could hear the sounds from outside and down the stairs, and in the week that followed, as people visited a few at a time, it was fine.

distinction between the 'individual' and the 'environment'" (Brennan p6). This work created (always different) new space, which expanded across the room, through the windows and down the stairs, and in the meeting of bodies, is altering and altered - a mingling of elements, environments and experiencing of the here/hear/now everyday with the there/then everyday.

This piece was a substantial development in my practice, working with and at a seeping edge between the actual and virtual, "Concepts of the virtual in itself are important only to the extent to which they contribute to a pragmatic understanding of emergence, to the extent to which they enable triggerings of change (induce the new). It is the edge of virtual, where it leaks into actual, that counts. For that seeping edge is where potential, actually, is found" (Massumi 2002 p43). This 'potential' is for an affective encounter; working through my affect heuristic, with the promiscuity of sound, the permeability of spaces/time and rematerialised *microelements*; bringing them together as a seeping virtual/real 'new' space which has potential to induce an unfolding of a smooth space to be experienced (and mixed up and altered again) by another 'bodymind'.

(as voice and 'pop up' text on RC)

*"Developments were informed by this site's particular 'everyday' as a visitor attraction, which made it a space in (constant) flux, the process of gathering and making tests, with time to reflect, allowing a consciousness to develop of the porosity of the spaces through windows, doorways and corridors. My linking of the flux and porosity of the spaces with Masumi's and other's philosophies of microshocks and affect theory, inform my expanding approaches.*

*Recognising, through my embodied experiencing in the process, the links between the flux/shifting elements of sound, the auditory porosity of spaces, and how we are drawn into 'art works', informed the making and considering of test pieces.*

*These, through reflection, in turn informed an understanding that what in part makes the work affecting for a 'viewer' is: the time/space to support encounter, it being open and 'long enough' for you to tumble into it and its relationship to the place it is from and in; as does linked imagery, so you are shifting between the spaces of gathering and showing, and so across time, connecting into prior experience/memory,*

*Considering Vertov's thinking/methodologies in relation to my own resulted in a new clarity regarding my 'affect heuristic' speculative approach, and a recognising of 'how much' I am in the work. This meant I could see and so apply the 'use' (Ahmed 2019) of this 'bodymind's' sensitivity to sound and light, my big picture viewing while also constantly 'caught up with' small detail or colour, and my non-linear experiencing of situation and event.*

*These not only informed my approaches, but give me a unique embodied interaction with the materials, which I then considered in relation to 'how to make' artworks for embodied encounter, as these experiences of mine are examples of that.*

*Scaffolds were in and of use all the way through the process, and of significance in informing how I approached the transposing of positions for my constructed audio in ways that the spatiality of those combined with the space it went into, heightening the porosity between them, and so the state for a viewer of there/here, then/now and past/future.*

*Investigating gathering multiple 'views' from the same points over an extended period allowed me to explore and understand the time based, shifting, and situation-changing nature of microelements, and recognising that these are potential triggers for an event/encounter that can be affecting. Combining this with the porosity of spaces, and the need for a link (through an image), I formed new understandings which advanced my techniques for the making of active spaces/environments that call for a lingering with the situation, and so involvement.*

*Practice/theory, embroiled through my own embodied situated knowledge, making evident the significance of porosity to this area of praxis - the seepage between the constituent parts that I am working with, the materials, ideas and modalities of working processes, and my extimacy, all coming together in a unique and individual approach, working at the edges of known/unknown/unknowing which is a position of potential affect."*

## Chapter Seven

About, facing away from the direction of travel:<sup>97</sup> *gathering* in a space where I thought something might be occurring.

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<sup>97</sup> The title of this chapter is taken from the title of the piece that was made. The title came, in part, from something that was *gathered* in the audio recording.



## Links text on RC:

This body of research centres around the process of *gathering*, [alongside theatre company Stans Cafe devising a new work], and the constant reflecting and testing through which a new work was developed for exhibition. Consideration is given to the *gathering* as an embodied activity and how this is particularly informed by 'this bodymind', working with the spaces and a developing a 'feel' for what is done.

The known spaces and short timeframe both allows and necessitates testing out elements in the showing space while the *gathering* is still underway, and giving parameters and a *scaffolding* to the activity from the outset. There is reflection on the exhibition, an on difficulties in knowing of other's experiencing, active event and not knowing. My working/researching approaches were extended through the process, particularly in relation to making active spaces and utilising and extending my own bodily situated knowledge.

I produced a paper/article/film output which was published<sup>98</sup> and a version of that specifically made for the research catalogue as the text for the reader is combined with the film, I would suggest a reader might be interested to 'watch' as an outline of my thinking at the time. Additionally, I made two single screen iterations of this work: one shown at Warwick Arts Centre, and binaural/360 audio iteration for an exhibition in 2021.

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<sup>98</sup> Doing/Thinking: About (facing away from the direction of travel). International Journal of Creative Media Research. (<http://www.creativemediaresearch.org>) DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.33008/IJCMR.2020.10> | Issue 4 | June 2020

(as voice and 'pop up' text on RC)

*"Several opportunities came together at this point, I was invited to have an exhibition at Birmingham School of Art, which coincided with dates for Stans Cafe Theatre company to perform a new piece. I had been discussing with them my gathering alongside their devising process, as I wanted to explore working in a space of the particular occurrence that this should contain.*

*Having previously undertaken 'experiments' exploring gathering following my affect heuristic, the aim was to extend this into my making and consider the approach in relation to bringing together elements so that they are active and shifting. So, developing my approaches and knowledge of making occurrent artworks that are spaces bodies can encounter, affect and be affected by.*

*The short timeframe and known spaces giving the work a scaffold from the start, meant that it could be a space of 'not knowing' for developments to emerge through. This was a sensing, open, embodied process of 'looking' for affective 'stuff' in the space, testing out ways to construct moments and parts and bring those together in and with the showing space, to make something that was active, and bodily engaging, where my only reference could be my own experiencing.*

*Greater understanding emerged through the process, particularly in relation to my methods of/for gathering and constructing works, including an understanding that these are of/in use across all the research. I recognised that my own situated knowing was developing through the praxis, and that this new knowing is textually difficult to define."*

*Gathering*: following my affect heuristic, looking for atmospheres + moments of something occurring.

I spoke with James Yarker, artistic director of Stan's Cafe theatre company (Stan's) in February 2018<sup>99</sup>, arranging to gather audio and imagery while they were devising a new piece 'The Capital'. I was slowly working at Dyffryn; however, I wanted to investigate other things that might happen in different spaces/places. In this instance, what occurs as 'artworks' are made and developed - not the work made, but active encounters that 'happen' and inform how the work develops. In my experience, these are often outside textual description; they are a bodily sensing of something 'having legs', the frisson, the affective encounter experienced<sup>100</sup>. Stan's devising process and the making of 'artworks', could be seen as outside the everyday or commonplace, but for 'artists', these are habitually part of 'our' practice, so this a 'particular' activity, but an everyday one in the spaces I inhabit.

It was agreed that I would gather as Stan's worked through late August and September, their new show opening at the Birmingham Rep in mid-October, aligning with when I had been invited to show in the foyer/museum at Birmingham School of Art. I would gather in their space on Mondays and Fridays and review materials at the weekends; neither I nor Stan's could know definitively what might be happening on any given day, the new pieces emerging concurrently.

I utilised *scaffolding*, a collection of supporting elements, bits of systems, some of more use on one day than another, mutable, flexible and porous. These include: the mapping of one space to another, discussions, pre-planning equipment or a time frame for recording. Essential in this was a holding 'in mind' previous learning and theoretical considerations as I worked, and a being open to a *sensed* awareness of the

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<sup>99</sup> I have a long history of working with Stan's Cafe in several capacities: commissioning their piece 'it's your film' as part of a live arts program at a gallery I co-directed in the 1990's; working with them as creative education coordinator; and being an associate artist.

<sup>100</sup> Massumi describes this as not having to be dramatic, and my interest is in the commonplace and everyday, So I am conscious I chose to work with Stans Cafe, whose work *Ultraopticon* – 20<sup>th</sup> floor Rotunda Birmingham, Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2023 – was a 'watching' of activity near and far and improvising a 'commentary' for it, so from global shipping movements, to a person on the street below, <https://stans.cafe/project/ultraopticon/> While Stans Cafe and I share an interest in the everyday, in this work, making the elements of it apparent through them becoming dramatic by commenting on them. The watching as an audience member, of them 'watching' this activity and constantly describing it, somewhat unnerving - and in some ways like listening to the shipping forecast – half understood information, that tells of half known activities.

*space/place* and the atmospheres and elements within it. The aim, to make manageable the work with this shifting, slippery *stuff*, while holding it gently, to not 'squash' and reduce<sup>101</sup>. My *scaffolds* are not set; there is no pattern via which everything is done, and each situation is particular. I use *scaffolds* across all the work, including the assembling of this chapter.

I felt excited, sure there would be something occurring and there were some very clear structures and parameters for *gathering* and constructing. There was a short time frame and a known space at a known point; my decisions had to be made quickly, and work put together with available equipment<sup>102</sup>. This allowed for the rest of my approach to be very open and based in my affect heuristic, confident that other bits of structure would develop, and I could open a space to construct the work in an active and affective way.

Before Stan's started the devising process, when the 'travelators'<sup>103</sup> had just arrived, James and I met and talked. I made some photographs of the space, one of those - with James just a yellow blur of high vis jacket, excitedly exploring the workings and structure of the travelators - became part of my exhibition. The space, that image, full of active potential, an excitement for both of us around how elements might come together. I was beginning to understand the necessity of 'activity', movement and shift in the works I was making, as 'parts' of affect, the image holds a moment of what Massumi describes as a microshock.

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<sup>101</sup> I outline 'scaffolds', in the *Methodology* and *Field Survey*, these are linked with to Deleuze and Guattari's smooth and striated which I look at in more detail in the *Coventry* chapter. In this chapter I aim to outline how I have used them in the process. Around this time, I become increasingly aware of structures/ *scaffolds* as ways to support 'my' 'bodymind' being able to undertake this/all process/es, required for this PhD 'project'.

<sup>102</sup> And additionally there were considerations as the exhibition space is also the main entrance space to the building and has routes through it and at times is very busy.

<sup>103</sup> The 'travelators', two 'moving walkways' on which Stan's show would be developed and performed were in the space and working when we talked, we had a go, they were smother and quieter than I had imagined. They were arranged in parallel, with a space between and behind, they would be 'across' the stage with 2 layers of curtain behind, with the idea that there would be moving and non-moving areas of the floor- so that some characters standing still, could still travel and meet another character.

## The *gathering* process (as this ‘bodymind’):

In this chapter I am considering the utilising of ‘having things in mind’ and being open to sensations. This is textually tricky terrain of non-conscious, *sensed* knowings, that when ‘looked at too closely’ are gone. But I will try to describe some of the edges, the influences, and thinking that come into play here, winding a pathway through the experiencing and trying to share. *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction* (Le Guin 2019) informs my approach to *gathering* from around me into a bag full of bits of the world, things found even if I did not ‘know’ I was looking for them, and then brought together in ways so they begin to make a ‘sense’ for/to me, of where they were from and my experiencing there.

I write further in The *Dyffryn* chapter on my ‘role’ in the process and at many points how I am in the materials gathered, but here I want to return to my being ‘this bodymind’. I am a mix of hyper and hypo sensitivities to sensory signals<sup>104</sup>. My hypersensitivities include light, sound, proprioceptive (movement), and vestibular<sup>105</sup> (balance) sensations. I hear my eyes move, I feel if my skin is dry from ‘the inside’, I hear and am aware of my blood circulating, my joints moving and muscles expanding and contacting. This is not unusual in a ‘bodymind’ such as mine<sup>106</sup>. What it does mean is that when I say I feel a ‘frisson’ in my *gathering*/making processes, I physically sense my skin shrinking<sup>107</sup>, the hairs moving, I have a rush of chemicals and ensuing reaction swirling around in my body. It changes my heart rate, my vision and what I can hear<sup>108</sup>. I am sure that this ‘stimulation’ I feel from the world around me is a causer of my interest in the field of affect; I am trying to ‘utilise’ the way I ‘experience’ in my *gathering*/making processes (all of them, including the textual), so I am making with theories of affect in mind, trying to hold a space in the environment to feel the ‘micro-shocks, the kind that populate every moment of our lives; for example, a change

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<sup>104</sup> Often our 5 senses are referred to, but we have many more and eight are now commonly described. (Durie, 2005)

<sup>105</sup> I walk and move with a swaying gait, and I often bang into things.

<sup>106</sup> Along with many other autistic/neurodivergent people I have heightened or diminished responses to internal sense signals (Neff, 2024)

<sup>107</sup> I have often described ‘having big thumbs’ – as that is part of what I experience, that a part of me is disproportionately scaled to the rest of me or the space I am in, but that is just one of many experiancings.

<sup>108</sup> I don’t always know ‘what’ I am responding to, and I have a diffuse sense of me/myself and other/things, it is not always clear for me if I am sensing something happening in or around me. I often have a strong physical response to spaces/ situations and other people/bodies.

in focus, or a rustle at the periphery of vision.’ (Massumi, 2009, p4), things of use in this endeavour, and with the aim to see what it is possible to make with/apparent and share, and in some moments what others might ‘make’ of being in my ‘experiencing’.

## In the space:

The travelators spanned the space, the motors running them to the right with some props and costumes. To the left the main area where the performers spent time with seating and more props and costumes. James at the 'front' facing the stage and travelators (where the audience would be). Initially there was a lot of discussion in the devising space; I tried to keep out of the way, not impact the process, and as I didn't want discussions or things that were explicit or verbally descriptive, I was sensing/looking for the *microelements* of the space, the *stuff* that made it like it was.

The area to the left was the busiest part of the devising space, the activity in it feeling like a mix of the mundane and the expectant, cast members waiting, moving props and costumes so they could be used or were out of the way. A sort of 'queue' would develop at times at the getting on point to a travelator, and spaces opened when people might need to step off. Through the being in the space and the reviewing of materials from this area recognising elements as, 'momentary cuts in the mode of onward deployment of life' (Massumi 2009 p4), these 'interruptions', shifts of attentions, were part of the *stuff* of the space, material with a 'potential', that when brought together with other elements might interact to make something; something I did not know yet know, but "doing it to find out what the result will be" (Paula Rego in Fortnum 2007 p55). Working with a *scaffold* allowed an openness, not knowing what might be there or of use, while being alert to the small things that were occurring, allowed for the *gathering*, this material becoming part of the left side of my exhibition.

Following on from *The Cairngorms* tests, I was considering the mapping of specific points of *gathering* in the devising space and what parallels they may have in the showing space as a strategy for transposition. In the showing space, there is a main entrance from the street; you can turn immediately left or right, or travel through the space towards the back of the building. I decided I would site my 'elements' in the central area of the showing space so that when the audience first entered the building and the space, they would be positioned where James had

been. This additional *scaffold* gave me a clear way to combine the spaces, with my work laid out roughly mapped to the points it was from, creating a 'new' space comprised of elements of both.



## Developing a 'feel':

As my 'feel' for the spaces of *gathering* and showing extended, I had more understanding of where things might be occurring that would be of interest to gather, and where I might situate these materials when constructed into the new piece. On subsequent visits, I gathered in multiple ways and concurrently, from James's position, further exploring the area to the left with travelator on/off points, and from just outside the space, sounds that in quiet moments might be heard in it.

Connecting my experiencing of the multifactoredness of sound and spaces with affect theory resulted in an understanding that for an affective response, for a microshock (Massumi), to occur, *stuff* needs to active, shifting and changing and that my '*microelements*' are bits of *stuff* that I can then actively bring together to make an affecting 'space'. I am speculatively *gathering*, but with a 'plan'; and in that and the reviewing following my 'affect heuristic' to see what I would 'find', what might become 'visible'. I recognised that I could utilise the meeting of the 'characters' on the stage as a form of a non-dramatic active coming together, and that the materials from the left I could work with, and combine them into a second grouping of image and sound, with constant small change and movement, similar but slightly different to the first.

## Additional materials/microelements:

I had gathered materials around the activity of devising, and additionally sounds that 'made up the space'; *microelements* that are 'not [a] smaller perception; [but] a perception of a qualitatively different kind... something that is felt without registering consciously [which] registers only in its effects.' (Massumi 2009 p.2). These sound elements of the everyday and commonplace of the space, 'made' by something occurring, maybe not seen, heard or noticed, until given a 'space' to be part of. Using contact microphones on the travelators allowed *gathering* of 'internal' sounds, a hum and judder, footsteps on and off, 'bodies' shifting on them. With a coil microphone, sounds that we just about hear from the motors and lights, but in a form I could separate from the hubbub of the space. I gathered sounds that came into the space, which give an extended 'view' into a wider 'commonplace audio ecology' sounds of being in a still semi-industrial area of the city: a grinder cutting, background traffic, seagulls.

## Testing in the process:

I was carrying into this process understanding from *The Cairngorms* and other previous works; Knowing through the bringing together of my embodied experiencing, my thinking and the theory I was exploring, that the work I was making should consist of moments/points. I was developing this further as clusters of materials, linking with other points and spaces between, to build a 'bigger' picture than one grouping could alone. I was also bringing in filmed elements, all locked off views, giving a partial image of activity and space; following on from the gaps between the 'clusters' I experimented with gaps in the film and audio, points where the sounds alone might make the environment and where gaze can be dropped and moved to another point.

As this working process had a tight time frame and known spaces, *gathering*, reviewing, drawing elements together and testing them in the space, all happen 'together'. I positioned sounds mapped between the spaces, the travelator sounds were to the right, near the travelator image, constructing a 'new space' 'from' the same place but not concurrent. Building these into a wider space of time than the 'duration' of the piece, linking the wider environment it was from, and in the showing space to 'that' wider 'environment', as when people move through the exhibition, opening doors, you catch sounds of the workshops below and the street outside. I was constructing the work/space, so *microelements* came together in a new 'unique' form, that was different in any given moment.

I was beginning to 'see' and articulate how these approaches spoke to my questions, giving me parts of the answers and new understanding of how to make embodied spaces of/for affect and embodied encounter. This was happening amid the process and so could feed into continuing *gathering* and inform how the work ultimately came together.

I was seeing interplay in the meeting of elements within my clusters of *microelements*; gathered in an active space of (many types of) occurrence across time, in which new things ‘happened’. When these clusters were brought together with others, there were points of interactions, moments of microevent, and a space began to develop, an environment that a ‘body’ could be/experience within. There was additionally the interplay between my constructed elements/space, the active audio and visual ecology of the space they were put into, and the bodies that move through that space, alive with what they bring with them. All of these came together<sup>109</sup> in a shifting, active, moving and meeting, a space of occurrence in which moments of affective encounter would occur and be present.

Through experimenting and testing in the showing space, I developed a very clear approach to the final *gathering*, what additional materials I wanted and where they might go in the space. I was looking for ‘more’ of James’s view, which would be the view that someone arriving in my show/space would see directly in front of them. The audience entering ‘in the position of James’, linking with my positioning of the audience in my seat, in the middle of it all, in the early *Cairngorms* tests. The imagery that would be projected on the back wall, the meeting of performers on the stage, an image made up of multiple parts, a assembly within the ‘frame’ that additionally held details and softer focus atmospheres. Framing that was tighter and then wider, so the scale and the surface shifted though its duration. The ‘surface’ it landed on would be broken up, part brick wall, part a white panted ‘block’ that was 3m high and stood just in front, so again a movement and points of gaps and change. I set up a fixed camera shot, with binaural microphones, in a central position to the ‘stage’, and binaural microphones on a performer. I shifted the framing through the filming, to gather wider and closer elements of what happened on the stage. As I worked

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<sup>109</sup> I could see similar things as I began the compiling of this chapter. I am bringing together a mix of elements; notes from the time of making, philosophies and approaches that inform my thinking and doing, a recorded discussion in the space, parts from talks/papers given, and reflections ‘now’. These elements, also put together using *scaffolds* and are worked with and on through a continuing of this approach. I am assembling these elements together, with bits of sound, images and ‘documentation’ from the space. I am adding in a diagram, a list of links and my voice to introduce and draw together the findings of the chapter, with the aim that this all builds a picture, with enough of an ‘image’ to lead someone in, and space for them to bring something of themselves; and that in all this can be found something of the ‘work’ made, the thinking and the new things learned through it all.

reviewing all the materials and beginning to put elements together, I had other roughed-out elements ‘playing’ in my studio, listening through them as I reviewed other material and catching glimpses of the visuals as I worked<sup>110</sup>.

I had been thinking about a title, wondering if it was something about seeing, colliding, slipping out of view. As I noted down ideas, ‘about’ kept appearing; as I was reviewing audio from James’s position in front of the ‘stage’, I caught him saying ‘face away from the direction of travel’, as a direction to a cast member. This spoke to me of what you might see looking the other way/ in different ways, and this felt like it was *About* that.

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<sup>110</sup> Not dissimilar to how I am working now as I am writing, I currently have a single-screen iteration of the work running on one large screen as I write on another, also linking to how I worked later in lockdowns with materials from Dyffryn to make the book. Playing sounds and visuals, as I am writing, links me with the work now, and to what I was thinking and experiencing then.

The space that it will be in and is from, an active grouping of groupings, embodied process:

The space of the exhibition was very different from the rehearsal/stage space. The showing space at Birmingham School of Art, a Victorian Venetian gothic building, is the foyer/museum entrance space to the building. There are pillars to each side, a high ceiling that meets at an apex, and windows in the roof. It is a little like a small church, flooded with light on a bright day. Part of my *scaffolding* was to roughly transpose the layout of the rehearsal space to this; the point you came fully into 'my space' would be where James had been positioned, looking towards the main stage activity, and other elements were positioned in relation to this.

On the left there were two screens and sets of speakers, the imagery and audio from the getting on and off point, with additional audio from contact mics on the floor and travelator. Further left, a pair of speakers with the sounds from 'outside', giving its semi-industrial context. To the right, on the wall, the early travelator image, and near later travelator sounds of motors and electrics across two sets of speakers. Looking straight ahead, 'James's view' was a split moving image across the brick wall and the white block, with a pair of speakers behind you and to the left. The moving image, from multiple points of one day, put together with a mix of long slow merging joins, imagery layered up, clear and then subsumed, and short hard cuts; the audio diegetic sound, some out of time and additional elements from other days.

As I worked in the space and on edits, I had in mind affective atmospheres, bodily response and the occurrence of event, so that by following my own affect heuristic, I could notice when things 'occurred', and how the space shifted with different positionings and combinations of elements. I understood from previous works that I needed to make the *stuff* active - multifaceted groupings of gathered *microelements* from the other place/space, put together in relation with others, but with gaps, shifts and space to invite promiscuity with the space I was constructing into, its shape and audio ecology.

Masumi's aesthetic event, which can be a particular sequence of images on a television screen or an artwork, emerges under [the same determined] conditions of individuation. However, Massumi employs Deleuze's materialist reading of bodily potentiality in Spinoza to argue that the relationally emergent event can generate a spontaneous response within the neuronal relations of the affected subject's body. (Richter 2023 p32/133) ·

I was constructing an environment to allow for aesthetic event, or, more accurately, shifting changing constantly different moments of aesthetic event, which when experienced are bodily. And that when bodies move through the environment I constructed, they would shift and change it, opening 'space' for more and different events, as they are in turn shifted and changed, a spontaneous neural/body response that exists just in that moment. I had to 'trust' that the approach of working in a very present and embodied way would give the greatest potential for the making of a space for embodied response from another.

## Reflecting on the work:

Arts practice is so often speculative. We know parts of what we are doing, what we hope might develop, a 'feel' for something; 'Artists enjoy the challenge of potential, and the pleasures of surprising themselves and so create spaces for not knowing, both physical and intellectual' (Fisher 2013 p77). These spaces are often where something happens, materials come together, we surprise ourselves with what occurs; but what can we know of another's experience of what we make. Considering the notion that, "People know what they do; frequently they know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what what they do does" (Foucault, quoted in Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982 p187)<sup>111</sup>, I am not thinking of our responsibility for, or understanding of, the consequence of actions, I am thinking of this as a description of artistic practice. It articulates the feeling of 'not/known', the excitement and interest in the *stuff* and 'doing' things with it, but the never quite knowing how what is made will be received/understood by another. A hope it will have meaning, invoke thought and response, but there being trepidation, and an awareness that others' 'otherness', means they may not see/feel anything in the things you do. Not knowing is a condition of/for an artist in making, and when working with/for affect and event, everything is more slippery and the environment is less describable, but this is the territory I need to be in to 'do' this work, and it is in the space of not knowing that things often occur. My description of *scaffolds* for 'holding' a space open, in this context, is a space of not knowing and of 'holding things in mind', so that I am 'primed' for sensing; "with genuine encounter.... our typical ways of being in the world are challenged, our systems of knowledge

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<sup>111</sup> This quote was a starting point for the paper linked to this work. The paper, through its 'writing', *scaffolds* my developing approaches for the putting together of texts/ways to share the research. Looking back from 'now' – I can see how the *scaffolds* of the making allowed for a very open sensing approach, but that I was also developing *scaffolds* for writing/sharing. These are akin to my processes of gathering 'materials' – they are about the writing of moments and bits – elements of what might be needed, and then in a similar approach to my video/sound editing processes, bringing them together, working with them to see where they need to be, trying to build them together into something that gives a 'sense' of what I am trying to share. At the start of 'this' process, I could not 'write' in the ways I can now, I could not 'see' or envisage a way to share what I was thinking/doing. The developing of my approaches to this through the early papers, presentations, to this paper and article, helped me see how/that I could do this. It is a process of *scaffolding*; making a structure that holds a place – where I can 'write' – that makes that okay for this 'bodymind'. And this continually developing approach to making, sharing and explicating thinking continues – I am 'now', in this process, seeing how I can form this 'thing' that I am doing, through the re-visiting and being with these materials (of sound, image, theory etc) thinking how this might be on 'the page', in the Research Catalogue, and in my final exhibition, that I could revisit the materials across all of this research, find elements in what I have, and put them together, around 'my desk', ask that another body sit in my seat, see elements shift and move, listen to my process(ing), see what I have been 'doing'.



disrupted. We are forced to thought" (O'Sullivan 2006 p1). The *scaffolding* supports my activity, and traction can be gained, but much of this activity is 'non-describable' and of *sensed* encountering. I am trying to work in this terrain, of fleeting 'thought', of only-just-perceivable disruptions, while holding things in mind, so I can 'encounter' the slight but present sensing of them and utilise this in my undertakings.

The work revealed possibilities in the construction with and remediation of gathered materials, and how they could 'inhabit' another space. Because of the shape of the space, the sound circled up and, it felt, came back down from many directions, the elements of sounds meeting at different places. Therefore, my thinking of these as 'elements', with gaps and spaces, was an impossibility in the space. But in this there was a serendipitous working with the space; things came together and shifted, merged and grew into each other. This was another thing I was exploring, and through this could see that the elements of areas when experienced actively together, made a 'new' space.

In a discussion in the exhibition with artist and academic Mona Casey<sup>112</sup> we talked of the similarities of the activity and sounds across the two spaces - in the context of the art school the materials 'everyday' and 'commonplace'- and how the sound activated the space. Not only did sounds from the building come into the work, it seeped around and through into other spaces and out onto the steps. The movement in the visuals, sometimes still and at other times quiet flurries of activity, changed the feel of the space, and the buzzing and footsteps on and off and of the travelator felt at once both here and there. It was an encounter; you were 'meeting' the materials, and where they were from, within the changed space of the exhibition; small events happening in different ways all the time. It felt occurrent, active and affecting. Through discussion, I could have an insight to another's experiencing of what I had made, and that in this work there was an 'eventscape' - "Sound transports the event into the listener's consciousness. The soundscape is therefor and eventscape. Because hearing is always active

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<sup>112</sup> There are snippets of the sounds in the space in the background of the discussion recording with Mona Casey and in the short 360 film, but I didn't record the space with my work in it. I realise that I generally do not, I think that there is a rationale around it only really being possible to experience it in the space; I am not trying to replicate the works. The documentation is a diagram, some still images, some of the elements and then the other iterations as single screen, with a short bit of 360 film, and the background of discussion in the space.

without 'earlids', listeners are involuntarily connected to those events", (Blessner/Salter in Carlyle and Lane 2013 p87) - that was active and shifting.

## Event<sup>113</sup>:

I am working in a space of affect and event, both not plannable, and where you cannot 'know' for sure, when, or how they might occur, or even if they have. As Lomax writes, "And once again she found herself asking if an event is going to happen. – 'Or, has it happened already? Rather than the too-early is it now the too-late?'" (2005 p8). I have held the notion of the requirement for interaction, shift, movements and activity in what I put together, and they need to shift and move with/through the spaces they are put into, and with the 'bodies' that come into play with them, that "each occasion of experience comes into itself amid activities that are not its own, already going on. The coming event takes a dose of the worlds surrounding "general activity" and selectively channels it into its own "special activity" (Whitehead in Massumi 2013 p2). Working with my gathered materials, constructing and putting them together into and with the space, I was thinking with affect and the manyeses and moments; and how these manifest in occurrent art/event in the work I was making.

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<sup>113</sup> late 16th century: from Latin eventus, from evenire 'result, happen', from e- (variant of ex-) 'out of' + venire 'come'. Simple dictionary definition: a thing that happens or takes place.

## Not knowing:

I cannot accurately textually describe these, possibly how 'it was' felt, but not 'what' it was, or what 'made it' occur. Fisher observes that, "Within education (at all levels) the prevailing culture requires one to be able to articulate, at the point of experience, what one 'knows'" (2013 p77). I think at the time I made the piece, I was 'pleased' with how it was in the space, I felt it had shown me things I could carry forward in my enquiry, informed how I made the *Dyffryn* STRIX shows<sup>114</sup> and my *Coventry* work. But I do not feel like I can articulate all of what I learned; some of it only sits within me, I carry it. This part of my continually developing situated knowledge is known 'bodily' through and feeds back into my embodied research process. Some of this research needs to be in spaces of 'not knowing', some I will be able to articulate, draw together with other elements of the thinking/doing/research, and 'construct' points where things make 'sense' and be shared. Because of the nature of affect/sound/this 'bodymind' others I will not.

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<sup>114</sup> Outlined in the *Dyffryn* chapter, and even though that is a previous chapter, the exhibitions happened after this – as that project ran across an extended time period.

(as voice and 'pop up' text on RC)

*"Gathering in a place of 'something occurring'; and developing an exhibition over a short time, necessitated an embroiled, embodied sensing approach, with little time to consider outside of my sensing experiencing until the show was open, when there was reflection and discussion.*

*The 'parameters' I used as scaffolds to open a working space of not knowings, embodied response and decision making. This along with developing the work across the gathering and constructing into the space concurrently at times, resulted in a permeability between the philosophy, the process and 'this bodymind'. Through this understanding emerged for working with gathered microelements, to create linked pools of active 'stuff', that together make a shifting, permeable space that can be encountered and affect / be affected.*

*Reflecting on the process and work made apparent the new understanding gained across the praxis, from the usefulness of 'scaffolds', the extended approach to embodied research, and how my 'situated knowledge grows and develops through the undertakings, into recognising that I had made a work that activated the space, extended it, and itself was extended by visiting and inhabiting bodies.*

*The work made 'through this bodymind's' affect heuristic and sensed activity, was a space of potentials for embodied encounter, coming about through the linking of event and affect, the activation of 'stuff' of a space where something was occurring, the layering of microelements inducing engagement and interaction, and it being porous to bodies (and the space)."*

(Nina West was the sound designer for Stans Cafe's The Capital. Elements of their composition, and at times parts of earlier iterations, are gathered up in my audio; I was given permission to use the recordings with their work within them.)

## Chapter Eight

Coventry: The Twin, exploring haecceities and quiddities.

## Links text for RC:

This chapter outlines my making of new work for *The Twin*<sup>115</sup> Coventry Biennial, 2019. Extending previous work through the exploring of qualities of haecceities and quiddities in the sound/*stuff*, looking for the specificities and how they might inform and support how we understand *microelements* in the soundscapes. *Microelements* of sound and imagery were gathered at Twin Spaces, and the process is described through reworked autoethnographic commonplace notes from the time, and I reflect on ‘me’ in the work, both as embodied researcher and as part of and activator of the sonic-environment.

I go on to consider the dual spaces and haecceities and quiddities, link these into my investigating of the Smooth and Striated (Deleuze and Guattari 2004), and the potentials of spaces to shift from structured to place of affect; that image might *scaffold* an understanding/way into sound, and how theses always emergent and developing ways of doing continually bring new elements into my approach.

The *scaffolding* of text for the drawing together of the first draft of this chapter and Research Catalogue page, informed the final configuration of this thesis, and I reworked the materials into a dule screen piece for a later exhibition, and constructed presentations and an early introduction to chapter tests in the developing of my thesis/RC approaches.

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<sup>115</sup> Alluding to the City’s extensive history of twinning since WW2 and commenting on the EU referendum.



(as voice and 'pop up' text on RC)

*"This chapter outlines through 'commonplace' autoethnographic descriptions - the processes and developments around the making of a new work for the 2019 Coventry Biennial, the title of which was 'The Twin'. At an initial site visit with director Ryan Hughes, it was agreed I would work with two spaces, The Row and The Undercroft.*

*As the work developed, I became increasingly entangled with pairing - the spaces, images with sounds and from philosophy smooth and striated - which led me to haecceities and quiddities, all of which I outline through the chapter.*

*I further explored knowledge developed through About and Dyffryn, including the ways that 'activity' in/on spaces contributes to and changes their affecting atmospheres.*

*My situated knowledge deepened through the doing, and considering the author/myself in the work, furthering my understanding of my subjective embodied researcher approach to making/working, including to the writing of affect/sound.*

*In the process, I was aiming for a holding of specificities and recognisable gathered microelements, and through these to construct 'things' that shared a 'sense' of where they were from and an/my affecting encounter with them."*

## Haecceities and Quiddities in the mix of approaches:

In *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, I had encountered the description, 'Smooth space is filled by events or haecceities, far more than by formed and perceived things. It is a space of affects, more than one of properties' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004, plateau 1440)<sup>116</sup>. It spoke to my interest in spaces of/for affect and the ways this links to 'event'; additionally it introduced me to 'haecceities'<sup>117</sup> and while exploring haecceity, I noted its synonym 'quiddity'<sup>118</sup>, both terms from scholastic philosophy. The descriptions of these terms felt redolent to part of what I am 'looking for' as qualities in my *microelements*. These are similar but different notions, which simply explained are the 'thisness' and the 'whatness' of something. The 'thisness' in my gathered materials are the qualities that make something distinctly as it is and linked to the specifics of the location and time; the 'whatness' links it and gives it a kinship with similar things, making it recognisably what it is. These are of significance to my research, as they relate to how we recognise and distinguish 'things', and as parts of how we are 'linked into' materials where there is no narrative. These therefore must be explored and ultimately utilised in relation to the making of spaces of/for affecting atmospheres and embodied response.

In this praxis I intended to gather sounds that were the 'thisness' and the 'whatness', that felt particular and specific, and so linked and gave a way in to 'themselves'/what I had constructed with them. Additionally, I had in mind things drawn from the previous investigations, including: working with/for affect, *microelements*, moments, event, details, multitudinality and working on the edge of knowing and through my affect heuristic. I utilised different types of microphones and camera set ups to gather a specific detailed 'view', as well as the surrounding

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<sup>116</sup> I look at *the smooth and striated* later in the chapter.

<sup>117</sup> Haecceity: Philosophy - that property or quality of a thing by virtue of which it is unique or describable as 'this(one)'. The property of being a unique and individual thing. (OED – 2004)

<sup>118</sup> Quiddity: Philosophy - the inherent nature or essence of someone or something. A distinctive feature; a peculiarity. (OED – 2004)

atmospheres, the generality of the space. I planned to make a work where I brought sounds together, while retaining a separateness, not being merged, but merging, while also moving and shifting to inhabit the space.

## The TWIN spaces:

*The Row*, a disused NHS clinic across three floors in the city centre, was being converted into the main hub and an exhibition space for the biennial, made up of a mix of what had been small interview spaces, waiting areas, offices, and corridors, with windows overlooking the shopping street, a roadway and roofs. The activity/sound was a combination of the reconfiguring of the space, meetings, discussions and deliveries. My work was shown on the second floor of this space.

Across several visits, I gathered with different microphones and photographed details. I used contact microphones on the windows and on boards used to make the new space, with omnis on walls open to the space, and a coil mic for *gathering* electric hum and buzz. I recorded street sounds, carpet tiles being removed, sawing, drilling, hammering, snatches of conversations and meetings, batteries charging, light switches, and water heaters. I photographed the floor, windows, residues of previous use. In the materials, both the micro and macro of a space in a period of change and flux.

*The Under Croft*, a medieval merchant's house cellar, left behind and underground as the city developed, is silent except when being accessed through the city archives when an airflow system and lights are turned on. I was acutely conscious of being the maker/instigator of the auditory atmosphere I experienced on my single visit, in my notes describing the visit as "mainly hum, me in space moving, photographing and writing," an "interesting hour of disappearing into what I was doing with no one else in the space".

I gathered the space and me/my activity simultaneously: hum, breathing, shifting the tripod, the camera shutter. I positioned the omni mics and camera at ear/eyelevel. I paused, considered my activity, set up a hypercardoid mic, and sat and wrote in my notebook;

I recorded the sound of me handwriting notes that became parts of this text. Then with a coil mic I recorded the lights, my camera and the sound recorder - 'recording' the internal sounds of the recording.

Commonplace/autoethnographic descriptions, discussions, thoughts and processes of reviewing and drawing the work together:

During the visits to gather, make, set up, and while the exhibitions were open - I wrote 'commonplace' notes as I worked giving an autoethnographic account of my undertakings and thoughts. I used the 'common' equipment I had for *Dyffryn* and *About*. The spaces I was working in were both concurrently 'everyday' and very specific<sup>119</sup>.

I reviewed the gathered materials in the days following visits, working quickly as I had six weeks for *gathering*, making and installation. Quickly recognising *microelements* in the materials that could make details and atmospheres, I began to build tracks based around 'points' in the *gathering* spaces. The work developed into two clusters of tracks. *The Row* atmospheres were from contact mics on the windows and open mics of the space, and details from close recordings of clearing, moving and building. *The Under Croft* atmosphere combined the hum of the space from air conditioner and lights, with some of my movements, the detailed close recordings of my activity, and the electric buzzing and clicking of the camera and recorder.

Through discussion with Ryan Huges, the biennial director, the siting of two elements of the work was arrived at, but what would be around them as part of the wider curation of the whole, I would not know until everything was installed. There would be two groupings of speakers playing mono tracks in different areas on the second floor of the row building, *The Under Croft*, near the entrance, *the Row*, near the windows.

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<sup>119</sup> Everyday in their original use, as well as the mundanity of the activities happening as I gathered; specific in their 'current' use as gallery /exhibition spaces, and as particular as any place/space is always.

The set up I conceived as one which made visible the linking and carrying of the sound and where it was from. It involved simple speakers on stands, with the audio players and wiring visible; and images, details I had photographed in the spaces, covering the front of the speakers<sup>120</sup>.

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<sup>120</sup> My early tests on 'nylon paper' didn't work, it muffled the sound too much and the images were not sharp enough - you could not see or hear the (micro)details that were what I wanted to explore. I then printed the images on thin Japanese tissue, that worked for both the sharpness of the image and sound. I explore this further in *the sound and the images*, later in the chapter.

## The 'author' ('me') in the work, trying to 'do things with affect':

This 'doing' brought me back again to my being in all the work, increasingly aware that all the processes are mediated through 'me'. Mine is a deliberately subjective embodied praxis, which informs all aspects of the research - from what I choose to use, where I work and with what approaches. In *The Under Croft*<sup>121</sup> I am 'noticeably' in the work: my movement, feet on a rough floor, my sleeve against the wall, my breath, and my shifting position. Additionally, there are sounds because I was there, the air transfer system, the hum of lights and electricity. I have no want to de-manifest myself from the work, to hide my involvement; there is a sort of self-portraiture in what I am doing, a recording of my 'bodymind' and its *sensed* response to the space, as well as an open acknowledgement of presence. I am in the fundamentals of the research; decisions are driven by my response - how a place/situation, piece of writing, discussion or any input touches and affects me, what and how I sense and make sense of all of it, and how I draw it all together.

As I work, I 'hold things in mind' that will inform and help me 'notice', actively 'listening out' for my *felt/sensed* affect heuristic responses. Included in this is a considering of how to leave space for the other bodies/spaces to 'meet' what I make and mingle, become porously embroiled, as 'Isn't an openness towards being affected what is asked for when one acts to make with something or someone else?' (Lomax 2005 p32). I want there to be a palpable sense of my bodily engagement, albeit obliquely, in the works make. My embodied approach is my best means of making spaces of embodied encounter for others.

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<sup>121</sup> The sounds in this work were generated by me, my activity and presence; there are bits and snippets of similar sounds in all previous pieces and more in the '20 mins of listening' and 'a sort of ekphrasis', this develops further in *gathering closer* and my aim for the final VIVA exhibition, to make my crip/neurodivergent embodied presence even more apparent.



## The Smooth and Striated, Plateau 1440:

While developing *Early Tests & Experiments*, I read The Smooth and Striated (Deleuze and Guattari, plateau 1440; A Thousand Plateaus 2004). This informed my emergent approach of *scaffolds* as something to ‘support’ the undertakings of working with and through affect/affecting atmospheres and sound, and then trying to, in part, share my understanding through text. These ‘materials’ have a slippiness, a changing shifting nature, that needed a ‘space to be held’ for the activities. The chapter also links smooth to affect and outlines the constant collapsing between the two spaces, informing my understanding of the potentials of shifting between states. I aim to explore and explain my understanding of and the link between this text and my/the use/usefulness of *scaffolds*, using paraphrasing and quotes from the text.

I use *scaffolds* in the construction of my ‘spaces’ so that my ‘mapped/planned’, ‘striated’ outlines - when the *(micro)elements*<sup>122</sup> I draw together in them are active - might collapse/translate into a ‘smooth space’. This speaks directly to the description of smooth and striated as a ‘nomad’ and a ‘sedentary’ space, not of the same nor opposite nature, existing only in mixture and relationship, and constantly being translated/transformed from one to the other.

The transformations and differences are explored as several simultaneous questions,<sup>123</sup> including ‘what interests us in operations of striation and smoothing are precisely the passage or combination, how the forces at work within space continually striate it and how in the course of its striation it develops other forces and emits other smooth spaces’ (p552). Considering this in relation to sound, (generally and) in my practise, which shifts and moves, initially relating wholly to its origin, becoming a mingled interrelating ecology, and expanding into other

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<sup>122</sup> haecceities and quiddities, atmospheres of ‘stuff’

<sup>123</sup> The simple oppositions, the complex differences, the defacto mixes, the passages from one to other, that they are not symmetrical, they can move in both directions, but with different sorts of movements etc. It is suggested that we need to envisage several models as a way of understanding these, which are like various aspects of the spaces and the relations between them. These are not the only potential models, and other types of spaces should be considered as they might communicate with the smooth and striated in differing ways. I later outline 2 models.

spaces - it becomes something of 'there' and 'here', both changed and the same. Its porosity and shifting nature allows bodies to meet it and be changed (an event of affect?)

I see the technological and maritime models as most analogous to my approaches. The technological is the process of making fabrics – or the qualities of my spaces. Supple solids, woven fabrics are striated, having two elements - warp fixed, weft mobile, with different functions, delineated edges, and a top/right and bottom/wrong side. Smooth fabric, such as felt, 'proceeds altogether differently'(p553); it is an 'anti fabric', an entanglement of fibres, in principle infinite with no top or bottom, not homogeneous and with continuous variation. The maritime model gives a clear description of the shift between the 'states' or spaces, describing the mapping of oceans, planned trajectories and points of known location as the striated space, and the moving between points as the times in smooth space.

My process involves my working in a space with a sensing 'openness', utilising my 'affect heuristic', 'looking' out for the *stuff*, and (*micro*)*elements* to gather, which are in part details and atmospheres containing the haecceities and quiddities that make that *space/place* as it is/I am experiencing it in that/those moments. With those weaving/constructing spaces, setting these up around 'mapped' points, maybe of 'knowing' for a viewer, give trajectories and ways of travelling with the materials, into an entangled, heterogeneous 'felt', space where *stuff* can shift and move and shape a space itself, porous to the environment and bodies around, me/us/it shifting from striated to smooth<sup>124</sup>, making something of/with those (*micro*)*elements* and being in a place of *felt/sensed* embodied response.

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<sup>124</sup> The 'smooth' is a concept attributed to the composer Pierre Boulez, in Ken Okiishi's obituary of Boulez, (ARTFORM, 2016) there is a description of the way he understands this 'smooth' as (a) 'point of contact between discourses of visual culture and music may be Deleuze and Guattari's interpretation of Boulez's 1960 concept of "smooth [lisse] or amorphous time and the proportional system to pulsating, or striated, time," in A Thousand Plateaus (1980 in French and 1987 in English). Rereading this passage now, with the added emphasis that certain figures and concepts gain in mourning, it occurred to me that it is impossible to fully understand this concept—or gauge its plethora of politicized misreadings—without understanding some basic elements of musical performance and composition. Deleuze and Guattari write, for example, that "Boulez says that in a smooth space-time one occupies without counting, whereas in a striated space-time one counts in order to occupy." Yet one of Boulez's most significant contributions as a conductor-composer is precisely the tension he creates between "counting" and "without counting." Counting here refers to the process by which the musician internally counts (or forgoes counting) the beat while playing, conducting, or even composing a piece of music. One of the most basic yet always difficult aspects of interpreting a score is to know when to count and when to stop counting to generate the right combination of sensations, affects, and pulses in what is being performed. (In fact, there are

## The sounds and the images:

The mix of the ‘everyday’ haecceities and quiddities from the spaces in the sounds gave some routes into the audio, but I felt the ‘viewer’ might need a gentle hand to know ‘where they were’. I had images that I had gathered alongside the sound, visually recording details of the ‘things’ making sound or surfaces that I attached mics to. These correlating details of *gathering* gave me a visual *scaffolding*, here less direct than the windows in *Dyffryn*, but points of reference physically entwine with the sound when on the speakers, which I was beginning to think of as ‘sound emitting objects’. This correlation of points and details of *gathering* across the auditory and visual led me to consider that the sounds and images should/could physically be entangled, and my use of the equipment as ‘part of the work’ produced subtle shift in my thinking, from the kit being seen just as ‘kit’, to it being parts of the environments and spaces made in a more active way.

In March 2019 I had visited Elizabeth Prices’ exhibition ‘*FELT TIP*’<sup>125</sup>. The show was across two rooms, both contained multiple elements. The space with audio visual works, which were two projected pieces, *KHOL* and *FELT TIP*<sup>126</sup> were of considerable interest and relevance to this research. Price often makes works following research into a subject or place, ‘collecting’ up materials and ideas that link to the core consideration of that enquiry, but sometimes tangential. She then works them together into complex audio-visual pieces with multiple layers, constantly shifting and changing, with mixtures of live-action, images, motion graphics and audio edited rhythmically. The pieces were separate but by proximity linked. Depending on where you positioned yourself, you could see them both concurrently, or move/shift between them, but you could always see the ‘light’ flicker of the other and the audio mingled within the space.

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moments in performance when one can stop consciously feeling the beat, even when its pulse continues to drive a forward momentum, and this is the closest I’ve ever come to an understanding of “smooth space-time.”)’

<sup>125</sup> Nottingham Contemporary, 16<sup>th</sup> Feb – 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019 – a solo-show from Elizabeth Price, featuring all-new works: two immersive video installations and a series of large-scale pinhole photographs

<sup>126</sup> *KHOL* (2018) 4 channel digital video projection, 5.30 mins & *FELT TIP* (2018) 2 channel digital video projection, 9 mins

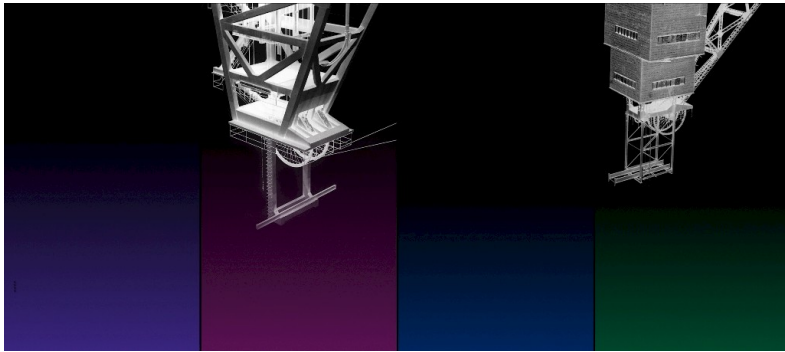


Image credit: Elizabeth Price, FELT TIP (still), 2018.

Commissioned by the Walker Art Centre, Film and Video Umbrella and Nottingham Contemporary, with support from Arts Council England.

Unlike mine, Price's work is narrative; 'Her richly layered narratives explore social histories and the shifting terrain of analogue and digital cultures' (exhibition guide). The audio in the work is very different from that in mine, but I recognised, in my own response to the works, that I would shift to 'look', and then 'listen' as a result; the visuals and audio entangled triggers directing my attention. When I was making the *Coventry* work, I was considering this in relation to elements in my work that 'links' the audience in; the images on the front of the speakers as a way to momentarily catch attention in a particular direction, which then takes you to the linked sounds.

In an interview related to the exhibition, Price says 'All fiction is promiscuous, in that you can have many kinds of things in a single story: discoveries, surprises, arrivals, events, etc'" (Price, Raven and Pys. 2019). I think of/describe what I am making as non-narrative, but that does not mean that there is no links between the elements within the works. These works of mine, even though of a place, are not 'documentation', and there is no objective observing within them. They are things I have gathered in my 'bag' (Le Guin 2019) of *stuff* from a specific *space/place*, and are embroiled with the *stuff* from all my travels, so maybe I am also weaving fictions? For my spaces to draw a body in, there needs to be a 'hook', which in part can be an entanglement of the image and the sound into something that is half recognised, and that you then want to understand more. That 'want to know more of the story' is at the intersection the sounds and images.

## *An always developing approach:*

### Reflections and discussions:

I visited the space several times after setting up my work, the earliest of these, just before the show opened, was the first time I saw my pieces with the rest of the work in the space. During later visits there was opportunity for informal discussion and feedback, making available to me what others saw/experienced in my work. My own reflections were mixed and included: recognising that some aspects of the set-up were outside my control; that the space was damp, so the images kept curling and therefore I needed to repeatedly try and 'resolve' the issues with them; considering if the images would have worked better separate to the speakers, possibly in a book<sup>127</sup> or as larger prints<sup>128</sup>; that this work was not an installation, but more sculptural sound emitting clusters; that the visual linking between stands, players and wires made them a 'constellation of *stuff*' which spoke back to setups of earlier works, but visually they didn't sit well with everything around them.

The sounds were active in the spaces, moving through them and merging with the sounds around. The seepage down the stairs, linking to previous works made, drew people up, not quite knowing what it was they were hearing in the sounds from *The Under Croft*. *The Row* sounds combined into the space differently, this was where they were from. They included traffic sounds recorded with transducers on the window, and traffic sounds were also 'live' in the space, but the work additionally brought in sounds of drilling, banging, making, voices, discussions, decision-making, so that haecceities and quiddities of/from the prior activity of the space was coming together with the now in the space of exhibition.

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<sup>127</sup> This may have still been in my mind when I was making *The Dyffryn Book*

<sup>128</sup> Strix second show in Dyffryn chapter

Comments included, “the images on the speakers, meant I leant in to look closer and then could hear that track and its details more than the others, so I then moved around and closer and back... experiencing all of it together and then parts individually”, for some then, the images activated movements and shifts. Another comment was that *The Row* work was “more inviting”, and that *The Under Croft* felt “oppressive”, which might describe qualities of the spaces and the differences between group human shifting activities towards change and a single person in a closed space with electrical and recording equipment.

### Details and images as links:

I am not making mimetic pieces for people to understand as a representation of ‘an idea’, I am making spaces that trigger affects and memories/responses, that are active, seep and merge with, alter and are altered by bodies and the environment they are in. I worked with the qualities of this/whatness and added images as a *scaffolding* for ‘recognising’, to set up a push/pull loose tethering. In the informal feedback, the comment that the images made someone move closer and lean in to hear the detail, reenforces this as an approach for eliciting an active (both physically/bodily and mental) engagement.

### Affect, sound and text:

I spoke earlier of the way sound is often described by what makes it e.g. a bird singing. During discussions around the work in Coventry, I recognised clearly the link between the describing of sound and affect - which is often explained via a description of what triggered, or a retrospective understanding of the emotion as a result of, the affective ‘moment’; as an example, the sadness in watching an animated story of a melting snowman (Masumi 2009)

Sound and affect are somewhere in a place of not being *seen* directly, while being seen *too* directly. Bhunnoo describes ‘materialized sound’, which ‘operates’ in the ‘gap between the experience itself and the language by which we articulate it’ (Carlyle and Lane 2013 p183). I am trying to find this space for/of a ‘materialized’ affect/sound language, one that does not ‘squash’ and remove the ‘nature’ of the *stuff* am working with, but which gives a possibility of sharing with others the thinking and experiencing. In early tests for this chapter, I explored if chapter may be video essays of sorts, considering my presentations and papers, but this still felt to ‘set’, too far away from the form of the ‘practice’.

### *Scaffolding* text:

Considering my *scaffolds*<sup>129</sup> for textual activity, and while re-reading *The Smooth and Striated*, thinking about the folding/transformation of spaces between states, that this informs my making of spaces in the art works, and that it additionally holds possibilities in relation to the notion of an ‘okay space’ to write in for this ‘bodymind’. I have practised a free writing, autoethnographic, note taking approach that feels ‘doable’, with later structuring and editing. The *scaffold* of, and which supports, the later editing and restructuring activity allowing for the initial *open* approach. This led to my working on the text in a freer way and with an approach that through the movement from one state to the other, it could then ‘hold’ some of the felt *sensed stuff*, while the later *structuring* would support the ways the text explained my developed knowledge and thinking to the reader.

In the considering of my approaches to writing this up, the texts I have read that have made most *sense* are ‘*Ordinary Affects*’ (Berlant and Stewart 2019) and ‘*The Hundreds*’ (Stewart 2007). They have several commonalities, such as small ‘chunks’ of text, positioned with others,

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<sup>129</sup> *Scaffolds* as supports, flexible things, but enough to give me an armature, of sorts, a ‘working area’; these might be a diagram or sketch, a ‘timeline’, perimeters around where, with what and for how long I gather, a mapping of a space to another.

which correlates with my making of spaces in installation art works. I began to develop further my approach of *scaffolding* the 'thesis' with a how I 'make'<sup>130</sup> and learning from the papers and presentations I had already delivered.

Recognising that as text is a 'not making sense activity' for me, I must twin it with - pin it to - an activity that I 'feel' and know. I began to approach my texts in the same way as my drawing together of materials for 'pieces', plan the shape, tone, colour, pace, movement and shifting<sup>131</sup>; listen/watch elements of the works and materials gathered so to 'be' in the space of the doing and thinking through my 'bodymind' again - and write there. This also consolidates the holistic approaches working across all areas of my methodology for making with/for affect and I opened myself a space for 'making' this text<sup>132</sup>.

I began to develop Research Catalogue pages as chapters, not a housing for the practice, but as spaces that could 'hold' the work and is more in keeping with my wider praxis. These are spaces where the diagramming, the materials, the text elements and my voice could come together in a shifting and open way, containing potentials for active engagements with the 'reader'. This chapter was the first that I made 'test' versions of in this way, and the diagram on this page is from that.

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<sup>130</sup> This process (writing 'up') is also one of realising/learning, at times re-realising/re-learning, working on this section in draft has made me aware again that I need to utilise the approach I have to editing video and sound, and constructing spaces. Use this as part of the approach I have to working with text, the gathering of materials, the processing through – all of it, as a useful analogy for me to think about, but also in the 'nuts and bolts', doing.

<sup>131</sup> Note from 2022 when first writing this: The delivery of a talk I was invited to give at Newman University for their Humanities Research Group, felt like it held this, as did some of the *doing/thinking* paper. But when I only have text, it is too static, I lose my place, there is no linking for me. It requires more of a 'diagramming', a 'picture' of the 'space', more materials on the RC pages, I am wondering about the 'introductions' being audio, making this more multi-layered, more how I would approach a talk, with pace changing and emphasis shifts, images, video audio and spoken word.

<sup>132</sup> I also attended a research workshop around practices to support spaces for writing for neurodivergent people. This included free writing exercises linked to somatic practices, which reinforced my developing thinking about embodied writing, and gave me additional approaches to/for working *with* not against 'this bodymind'.



(as voice and 'pop up' text on RC)

*"Through the embodied exploring of two spaces, linked only by approach and use for an event, developed a considering of the linked qualities or parts in microelements, which were gathered through a range of techniques and included sound generated by activities, both mine and others, and how these change the spaces. These are described in my autoethnographic voice, and linked to theory and others practice/thinking, in an always emergent bringing together to explicate the praxis.*

*Multiple microelements of different qualities are needed to link a viewer into the works, qualities of haecceity and quiddity - the 'thisness' and 'whatness' - can activate a recognition and so a link into nonnarrative works, while linked images scaffold ways into the sounds. All adding to the picture of what is needed in the processes and the things made.*

*My embodied approach developed my situated knowledge, which extended in iterative ways that fed back into the process. To understand an embodied experiencing, you must have been in it, making this an apposite method for making things that affect other bodies.*

*(Writing) approaches and scaffolding feed in to the 'drawing together' of the multiple elements in the thesis, supporting 'this bodymind' and the process.*

*The Research Catalogue allows me to bring together elements in a way that has a 'kinship' to my 'making of artworks', developing my approaches as ones across all areas of the praxis.*

*The 'work' is in the shifting, merging, mixing with the knowings and being of the spaces and bodies met, the multiple and multifaceted elements that have potentials for recognition, specificity and being able to merge and transform, from one type of thing to another."*

## Chapter Nine

The Dyffryn Book: A revisiting (in very specific times) and experiencing permeability.

## Links text on RC:

This work started as a hoping that some 'doing' might get me making again (as my movement forward with making and thinking had stalled though the covid lockdowns<sup>133</sup>). In this chapter I outline the 'revisiting' with the materials *gathered* at *Dyffryn*, and how that embodied process felt.

A book<sup>134</sup> work developed through the process, as did a new clarity concerning how 'qualities' in the materials can bodily link us to memory, and a recognising of my own desire to share my experiencing thought the artworks I make, and that this is also a sharing of new understandings.

The book is on the RC platform as a slide show of the page spreads.

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<sup>133</sup> Initially, as the first lockdowns happened in March, we talked of postponing the exhibition at Dyffryn, it became apparent through late 2020/early 2021 that I could not finish the work planned as part of the PhD; we didn't know when things might begin to fully re-open, and the National Trust at Dyffryn had lost a lot of revenue, they were making some staff redundant and were considering if the house would re-open, it currently still has not.

<sup>134</sup> I have made several books over the years, so there was a familiarity of form, and a book itself is a structure. I could look at the number of visits and think about the number of pages; making some of it doing I could 'just do', which meant the book found its own configuration. I could then be very free with the writing, 'listening' to my heuristic response to the materials.

(as voice and 'pop up' text on RC)

*"I had been planning for the Dyffryn final exhibition to take place in the summer of 2020 when the Covid pandemic began.*

*By early 2021, I was struggling with 'making'. I tested pieces out as screen/online works, but could not animate them in useful ways; I was feeling 'lost' in my research without practice. Recognising my 'want' and 'need' to make and that the Dyffryn work felt incomplete, I decided to revisit the materials. I spent a couple of days each week immersing myself in the sounds, images and video, whilst making text notes.*

*The revisiting was speculative, extensive and powerful. A 'trying to get unstuck', and 'see what happens', through deliberately becoming absorbed in the sounds and images, and writing/unfolding the sensed, entangled process.*

*Developing the materials into a 'book'- resulting from experimentally working with the images and text and ways to bring them together. The book, even though 'bound' by its form, felt immersive and expansive.*

*The text, extending early test works exploring writing sound, in this became material not 'facsimile'; more something of my experiencing.*

*Significant insights developed through the process, relating to the porosity of materials and bodies, the links between sound, memory and the qualities in materials, and how these can be activated to create potentials for affective encounter. I also began to 'see' how the enquiry and new knowings were in me and so carried into the practice."*

## The process:

At times I had never liked just being somewhere as much as I liked *'being there'* in the re-visiting. It gave me a way to 'travel, I drew into myself all I could from the materials, stepped bodily into them and the journey they took me on. The permeability between my 'bodymind', the materials and my studio environment, caused moments of feeling in 'that' space (Dyffryn), and concurrently in my studio - as I heard myself type, move my feet on the bar of my stool, aware of the street to my right. At points, I felt not sure what of my experiencing in that moment were *'in'* Dyffryn or *'here now'*.

This was an entanglement with the materials, and points of wondering what were memories and what were current bodily responses to the sounds; maybe it is that both were informing my affect response: "My memory drives my agency to act upon the perceived, to extend it and give it the depth of its duration," and "...with references from another time and another place, and my body inhabits in the now of its present actions towards the future that takes it as its past." (Voegelin, 2010 p187). The materials brought memory to me and made me acutely aware of the space I was in, my body actively inhabiting its now and its past concurrently. In this bodily encounter with the materials, I felt unsettled, but also very present; these I suggest were moments of affecting encounter, are significant to the development of my understanding of these, and potential ways to work with/for them.

## Foreground/background, atmospheres/details, edges and text:

The intense revisiting process was pivotal in my noticing '*qualities*' in the materials. In the images, shallow focus, shifted and blurred images through windows, sharp details, colours and tones. Paralleled in the audio, points that felt 'bright' and clear, and 'atmospheres' of many sound elements. In the audio these are shifting, new elements coming into play, details becoming merged with others. These '*qualities*' there because of the decisions I made in the *gathering* - the kit, the attenuation of a mic or the aperture of a lens. Having at the time gathered *stuff* in ways that bodily stimulated my senses, I had not until this point, consciously considered my decision making in relation to the materials.

The images giving a 'frame of reference' to sound from the same space, the edges become permeable. The audio-visual contract (Chion 1994) is not broken as such, but shifted, image as 'glimpse' of where you are, the audio giving width and depth, opening an expanded field of view into a space that you can 'envisage', seeing what is not there in this interplay. In the book these come together as something of affect and my interior experiencing (extimacy), differently than in works in spaces, I am maybe more *visibly* in them<sup>135</sup>.

In the dual modes of looking and listening concurrently, a 'view' emerges, a glimpse of the unapparent quotidian things of the space, a detail in the images draws me into the colour, light and tone, then a detail I recognise draws me deeper into the sound. Accretions and layers, things becoming more present, others dropping back, following my affect heuristic 'nose', finding and drawing elements together into the across-time shifting of the audio. Working with the decisions made in a moment (of *gathering*), of what was sharp foreground and what was atmosphere, when brought together yield a betweenness and so movement - which positions a body in an alertness to feel, to experience

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<sup>135</sup> I have not at the time of writing this 'shown' the book, I have shared parts of it in presentations, I expanded on some of this thinking in a conference paper. The book takes me to the place/time it is from, I am not sure how well it might work for others, but this process and activity help me develop my thinking, adding to my 'diagram' of how to work with and for affect and get back to doing/thinking.



the elements of *stuff*, for them to become 'something'. Understanding through the process and reflection that this is in part the making of affecting atmospheres, and things of encounter, the practice research being clearly in view to me in these moments.

I was writing in response to the experiencing, trying not to 'think' it first, aiming for text that can 'carry' something of the/my experiencing of the audio with it, and then bringing images and text together as a 'miasma' that you might pick a line or word out of while visually shifting between detail and tone. I sought to generate a slippiness, to be in motion as the audio was<sup>136</sup>, wanting the text to be an element that had its 'own authority, rather than existing as a "surrogate" and as a "document"' (Cascella, 2012) of the sound.

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<sup>136</sup> Daniela Cascella says: 'Yes, a fundamental question is: How does writing exist in relation to the experience of listening? What can it add and what can it take away? Listening and writing are two different dimensions that, in fact, might tend to each other without ever completely meeting up. My attempt is to think about how writing can add something to the auditory experience' (2012). In this research, I was not thinking how writing can add 'to' the auditory experience – but how the text could add/hold something 'of' my experience into the potential experiencing of another.

## Desire and frisson in the sharing:

As I work, I experience 'frisson', as a manifestation of my 'affect heuristic', and a bodily indicator of 'desire'. Batchen speaks of (my paraphrasing) a cultural collective 'need', a 'desire', linked to Constable and The Romantic Poets, to move from the camera obscura to a way to pause a moment, hold and reproduce an image to share (2002). The process of the revisiting and putting together the book, brought back my 'desire' - a 'wanting' to hold a moment, a point of awareness, something transitory, temporal in nature, like Constables clouds skitting across the sky; not 'taking' it from where it is, but *gathering* it, and using it to construct something 'new' as a sharing of experiencing.

A substantial development in my approach and understanding was seeing through this material, how 'porosity' is necessary for affective encounter. I had been intrigued by windows, pool surfaces, apertures and doorways as I gathered, pointing 'the camera directly into the light, directly at that feature of the room that is neither inside or outside but both' (Batchen 2002, p9) and *gathering* image and sounds of between/both. In my '*Elements#*' exhibitions, outlined in the *Dyffryn* chapter, I had recognised the porosity of the spaces and the sound, but it was in this activity that I really 'saw' the porosity of bodies, spaces and time, through my own experiencing of it, understanding that the works I make are full of the tingling of the hairs on my arms, the considering how sound connects us, brings us to memory and informs our understanding, making the works sites of sharing of/for experiencing and knowing.

(as voice and 'pop up' text on RC)

*"What started as a 'trying to get unstuck' developed through the powerful capacities of speculative, open, nonconscious, sense/ing approaches used in an immersive exploration of previously gathered materials.*

*Through the process I was able to recognise the links between sound and memory in a porous and active then/now/future, as part of affective encounter.*

*That the 'qualities' that I had embedded into the materials, the tones, shifts, atmospheres, and how I drew them together / put them in relation in the book - heightened the encountering.*

*And extending my work with 'text' in ways that it became a 'material' in this praxis, and so has new potentials in this research.*

*Identifying how the activation of an 'extended field of view' occurs through the bringing together and allowing for the porosity of images and sounds, and that this is then able to induce the porosity between materials/spaces/bodies, and so 'prime' a situation for an embodied encounter.*

*Recognising through considering my own 'desire' to make and share, appreciating how much of 'me' is in the 'work', and carried in this is the 'research', and understanding that consequently, the art works are sites of sensing and generating, experiencing and knowing.*

*Fundamentally within all of this is porosity, not only between the materials, spaces, sounds, time, but also with/between this/my and other 'bodies'; and that all of these play roles in the drawing together of and activation of an affecting atmosphere and encounter, adding to my understanding of approaches to working with/for affect to make spaces of embodied encounter and feeding into future research."*

## Chapter Ten

*Gathering Closer*: drawing things together in conclusion.

## A foreword to *Gathering Closer*: making of works.

This foreword to the chapter briefly outlines the works made alongside the drawing together of the research, this chapter and the works are titled '*Gathering Closer*' for two main reasons. Firstly, throughout the period the works cover, I was bringing the research into this form, I was getting all my notes, recorded discussions, elements from papers and talks, my 'thinking through the doing' together; trying out and testing ways to put it together with 'materials' gathered and from the works/exhibitions made. Secondly, the materials and resulting artworks, were gathered closer to 'me', they are from my everyday sonic-environments, gathered in my house, garden and studio.

My initial *gathering* in this process, was of my making of a new skirt (having made clothes all my life), the next gathered on the hottest day of the year, 19<sup>th</sup> July 2022 (and on record), in my garden and tested out as a multichannel work. Neither gave me things that I felt I could explore in depth while working on the drawing together of the thesis, so I looked closer. I began to gather sound, film and still images as I was working. My process has always involved handwriting notes and making rough diagrams - these maps out the work to be undertaken and ways to try and bring together my thinking and share it. I already had some diagrams from papers and talks and roughed out RC pages; these began to come together with some of the audio within the RC exposition as the backgrounds to chapters (which I am sure by now you have experienced).

In March 2024, as part of a group show '*habitus*' at The Hive Gallery, Birmingham. I showed a 3 channel/screen testing out of the work. The exhibition was 'curated' by the artists involved as a testing of works in progress and a coming together and seeing how the works would interact in the space. The art works included paintings (in the broadest sense), embroidery, digital constructions, light boxes and my video and sound pieces. In the exhibition my screens and speakers were relatively small and unobtrusive, but it was my sounds that brought the

space together. In October/November 2024 I showed a larger scale single screen version of the work (in a staff exhibition at Birmingham School of Art), this is the main piece on this page.

My final submission includes an exhibition, *Gathering Closer*, which is briefly outlined in the *Introduction* chapter. It will be (now was) a new work made through the bringing together of elements from across the research in a porous sharing of praxis. I will make it utilising my affect heuristic, the *plan/scaffolding* is to have multiple potential elements to work with in the space, and through my embodied process position and edit these into a coherent 'work' that in part shares the research while also being a space to bodily encounter it.

## Links text on RC:

This chapter starts with a foreword, which briefly outlines some of the practice made around the process of drawing the research together, a single screen iteration of this is shared as a video on this page. This is the only chapter that does not have my recorded 'voice' in it; by now I hope that you can hear me as you read, and it seemed apposite to be quieter through these conclusions.

The main elements of the chapter are a revisiting of the research aims, an outlining of the process of the work and the putting together of this chapter, followed by the largest section, an outlining of outcomes and new knowledges, the chapter, and thesis, then ends with a brief review of areas that this research and its outcomes may be of interest to, and my initial thoughts on future directions that might develop and extend this work.



## Revisiting the aims of the research:

The central concerns of this research were to gain an understanding of the affective dimensions of our/my everyday sonic-environment. Alongside this I sought to develop approaches that would support the making of fine art installation work constructed with gathered (*micro*)elements of these environments, in ways that hold the potential for events of affecting embodied encounter. Key to this has been developing a praxis methodology that allows for the working with/for affect across all the research. This is centred around 'this bodymind' as a site of embodied research, and utilisation my 'affect heuristic' and continually developing situated knowledge, it is unquestionably subjective and located within my specific cultural and social experience.

The scope of this investigation is, for practical reasons, narrow <sup>137</sup>. I have been bodily exploring small areas/spaces, while considering art/ists, theorists and literature particularly concerned with microshocks and event in affect theory, having identified this/these method and field to be key to informing approaches to making and working with and for affect. As affect is a pre-conscious response, *gathering* research 'data' through questionnaires or interview was not germane, therefore critical reflection, discussion, and informal feedback around works made was utilised. Furthermore, as affect and sound are textually 'tricky'<sup>138</sup>, the outcomes are primarily shared through test works, fine art installations practice and this multimodal collaging on the Research Catalogue.

The creation of and reflection on the original sonic-led fine art installation artworks has informed the development of an understanding of what might be necessary for the construction of spaces for affective encounter and new moments of embodied response, and a recognition that an embodied approach is fundamental to working with/for affect.

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<sup>137</sup> Additionally, it has for periods been limited by available time, resources and access to sites/places to gather, work and exhibit; some of this was linked to the Covid pandemic occurring while the research was in process, and some intersectionally or separately to circumstances relating to being the crip/neurodivergent 'bodymind' I am.

<sup>138</sup> And as a neurodivergent 'bodymind', text is additionally slippery and unclear; I have never been able to make it do what I want it to, on re-reading text I have worked on, it generally does not do what I thought it did.

## The process:

As I explored my 'field', developed approaches through *Early Tests and Experiments* and *The Cairngorms*, and made test works, my understanding grew and clarified areas for consideration in the subsequent research. These I further investigated through the praxis processes of *Dyffryn* (and *The Book*), *About* and *Coventry*, the creation and exhibiting of original artworks, and explication of thinking through papers and talks and iterative reflection. The drawing together of all the research for submission additionally extended and deepened my knowledge of things required in/for the making of spaces of embodied encounter.

The research was not a starting from scratch, but a building on and with - which brought together and entangled the making of - artworks, literature, artists work, praxis approaches and this 'bodymind'. Knowledge coalesced through *doing/thinking*, iterative cycles of *gathering*, reflection, discussion, revisiting and reworking. The new knowings resulting from the praxis are made manifest in the new original art works, the development of a unique methodology/approach, and how it is all brought together in this Research Catalogue exposition as thesis. This was all undertaken with the intention that this research will extend existing thinking on affect theory, affecting elements in sonic-environments and the creation of embodied spaces as fine art installation, and a hope that others can use and develop elements of this work in the future.

The *scaffolding* I use within this research is specific to this body of work, linked with the theoretical concerns of affect and embodied practices and my wider methodological approaches. Furthermore, the way that I developed the *scaffolds*, what has been of use and reused, or what was only of use in a moment, are particular to this 'bodyminds' ways of doing and being. Unlike the particular *scaffolds* in use, the '*scaffolding*' as a concept is transferable, and therefore of use to others praxis, to be utilised in a range of research areas, and by different 'bodyminds'. This *scaffolding* is at times clearly visible within the form of the exposition, the texts and the artworks, it is referred to and considered at

multiple points through this thesis, however, at other points, these *scaffolds* are not so 'seeable' and sometimes not evident at all. My intention was that my *scaffold/ing/s* were to be mutable and permeable, there to hold open a working space, an environment in which things could be constructed or structured around. Where they are visible in the final formations, this occurs because this is how they need to be, but I did not intend for the *scaffolds* to always be present and obvious, I wanted these striated structures to have the capacity to fold into smooth spaces, appear transparent, or slip from view when their use in the process was concluded and their visibility was not required.

The outcomes of this research are an entangled collection of elements<sup>139</sup>. *Ordering* these is difficult, as on each revisiting/reworking they shift and move. They are not distinct or separate things; they did not occur in delineated or discreet ways. This is all permeable, shifting *stuff*, which is why a *scaffold* is needed, in this moment, the *plan* for this next part is that I outline the outcomes following the order of the aims, starting with the exploring of affecting dimensions of our quotidian sonic environment through the doing, and how this opened links to theory/literature and spoke back to it. This will be followed by an outlining of the emergent embodied methods, and finally, the understanding of the making of spaces which hold potential for embodied encounter.

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<sup>139</sup> I had considered right up to the last moment including a manifesto of sorts, and some diagrams which would outline my thinking and *lay out* the things that I have built up pictures of needing to *have in mind* as I work (mentioned at points through the thesis). But through attempted making, I recognised the intrinsic flaw, that the things I hold in mind are not *only* words, they are embodied sensed things, developed situated knowings and gut feelings. The words are surrounded by empty spaces on a page – in my mind they are not, they are more *formed*, fuller, linked and shifting things. I realise that the closest I can come to those diagrams would be parts of the RC pages and art works made, and you have those.

## Outcomes:

I recognised early in the process that my understanding of the affective dimensions of our everyday sonic environments relied on and was 'known' to me through my experiencing of it; linking this situated knowledge to my increasing understanding of affect theory allowed a drawing in to more specific areas. Exploring the intersection of 'microperceptions/microshocks' (from Leibnitz, Massumi et al), and our experience of 'sounds' around us and how we make meaning with/through them, led to a comprehending of these shocks as events of affect that may be triggered by the *stuff* of a *place/space*. I developed a notion of *microelements* as something I could 'look' for in the sonic environments and formed a novel embodied framework for *gathering* the *stuff* of *spaces/places*.

This developed into an understanding that our experience of *stuff* of *space/place* is multidimensional and involves atmospheres of many shifting and changing elements and moments of 'microshock' which occur in relation to these as triggers of affect. I realised that I could construct/compose my gathered *microelements* and atmospheres into pools of active shifting *stuff* which were new moments of affective event within a space<sup>140</sup>, which began to happen in *The Cairngorms Shee Water* test piece and developed through the later art works made, bringing about a recognition of the importance of qualities in the materials. If these atmospheres and *microelements* hold qualities of haecceity and quiddity (*thisness/whatness*), then these can make and reactivate, memory (learned understanding, skills etc.)

All aspects of the research were undertaken through the same approaches; the porosity of the theories, bodies, materials and processes involved has allowed and necessitated this. I developed new knowing through *doing/thinking*, which was *tested*, reflected on and developed further through iterative cycles of making art works, sharing, discussion, reading and making associations between elements of the research.

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<sup>140</sup> A space made 'from' materials of the other - not a documentation of what happened previously, but new spaces of affective atmospheres and moments of affective event.

This brought into focus the requirement for a heterogeneity of embodied methods, all utilising and developing the situated knowledge of this 'bodymind'.

Through my individual *lens*, I have developed a praxis methodology utilising my 'affect heuristic' and *scaffolds* for facilitating the 'work'. Adopting a positive speculative space of 'not knowing', and a neuropositive relationship to 'myself', enabled an openness to 'sensing' and 'following my affective nose' in the process of *gathering* and the constructing of artworks along with other ways of sharing such as this *'thesis'*. This additionally supported the development of 'porosity' and extimacy in my embodied process, all required as only though *bodily experiencing* can the elements for potentially embodied experience be gathered, worked with, brought together and put into *play*.

What I have made is for the 'experiencing', where some parts of what is bodily experienced are 'common' to 'me' and the 'audience', and others are 'individual'. I both ask the viewer to 'sit in my seat', and know something of how/what I experienced<sup>141</sup>, while also to recognise, be active in, and open to, the triggering of (small nondramatic) 'events' within an affective atmosphere - through the reactivation of prior experience.

I adopted a speculative and open approach after experimentation early in the research showed that this was required for the 'finding' of the affecting elements and atmospheres within our quotidian sonic-environments, and the *gathering* of and working with *stuff* of them. Additionally, this approach was necessary so that I could work with them without abstracting or using them to represent anything other than 'themselves' and so explore 'their' potential affective dimensions.

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<sup>141</sup> My experience mapping a route in for the 'viewer'.

Through the research I developed an understanding that the utilisation of a range of permeable, flexible, mutable *scaffolds* supports the holding open of a 'space' of investigation, *gathering*, making of art works (both physically and conceptually) and 'putting together' thinking for sharing. I recognise that this 'bodymind' needs *scaffolds* for textual (and other) activity, as does the *stuff* of sound and affect due to their intrinsic 'slipperiness'.

Utilising '*scaffolds*' gave edges and shape to how I would work, gather and 'form' the materials. I have 'constructed' these *scaffolds* to be fluctuating, expandable, shifting things, allowing for elements to move in and out of place and focus. I have used them to 'hold' a space enough that I can undertake this as a sensing body with '*things in mind*' (again another structure). Deleuze and Guattari's 'Smooth and Striated' (2004) informing my approach to *scaffolds* and recognition of the potential of folding/transforming from *structured* (scaffolded/striated) into *smooth* space, which 'is filled by events or haecceities, far more than by formed and perceived things' (p479), and the utilising of this in the constructing of occurrent installations/works/spaces.

I identified through reflecting on practice and theory that the *gathering* would be from a place/space not in transit, and required multiple elements, gathered in different ways (not necessarily concurrently); this allowed for the construction of a 'picture'. In creating an expanded 'space' I can then give the possibility of moving from observing to inhabiting, an environment making 'time' with the materials, and for them to be 'felt' and so engaged with 'bodily'.

Understanding from my own experiencing and the literature that affect and sound are multifaceted, shifting and active, the spaces I construct need to be ones where *stuff*, the atmospheres and *microelements*, come to the fore, fade, shift and move, and where sound, affect, bodies and spaces are porous and promiscuous. The 'spaces' I make therefore need to be constructed *with* the space they will be in, and allow for the bodies that will interact to 'open up' an 'extended field of view' that is not singular and static.

I recognised though my revisiting/reworking of materials, and my reading and considering around the transmission of affect, the importance of some 'qualities' in the materials - that haecceities and quiddities, the 'thisness' and 'whatness' of them, could hold points of 'recognising' and of 'query/thought', and that my use of images can also add 'links' which *scaffolds* an engagement with the works. These *felt/sensed* and recognised things trigger 'activations' of prior encounter and active meaning-making; they are themselves embodied responses and experiencing, and prime a body for more.

These all come together with/through the sensing experiencing of this 'bodymind' in the constructing of my original art works. My experiencing of the spaces, the specificities and differences of the *stuff /microelements* I gather and work with, are intrinsic to how we respond to, interact with, and recognise them. My setting up of 'pools' and points to create a space produces gaps and porosity, and my layering of shifting materials elicits seepage and 'extamacy' between bodies in the recognising and half knowing. These collectively open a permeability between *here/there, now/then, 'this'/other*, making the works sites of active shifting and changing *sensed* awareness with the potential for affective embodied encounter.

## Changed perspectives and future directions:

The new knowings developed through the research includes: a methodology that combines and explores the intersections of affect heuristic, crip/neurodivergent, feminist, new materialist, emergent, embodied approaches; a new and unique approach to the creation of artworks as sites of affecting embodied encounter; and an extending of understanding of the affective dimensions of quotidian sonic-environments.

These are shared through the original artworks made and this multimodal thesis.

The research will be of interest to, can inform future investigations and be worked with/built upon within:

- Artist/praxis research, as this work informs discussions relating to emergent art practice methodologies, specifically those interested the integration of approaches across research and in embodied methods.
- Theorists of affect, embodied research and new materialism, due to the utilisation of an affect heuristic to work with/for affective encounters, and particularly as the art works are sites of potentials for the sharing of active affect/encounter and the formation of new knowledge.
- Disability studies, because the methodology adds to the canon of thinking around research informed by lived experience, especially as it includes a neuropositive approach which utilises characteristics of ND conditions as 'tools' in the research and has been brought together to work 'with' a particular 'bodymind'.
- Occurrent arts, as the works themselves are places of sharing of new knowledges, sites of research and generators of new event.



I am considering how I will further develop this research, including in/through future installations to work with spaces for their particular 'atmospheres' and considering 'our' relationship to 'environments' <sup>142</sup>; and extending my use of text and (my) voice in my praxis and construction of art works. I also plan to continue to work on, explore and develop my affect heuristic embodied approach, and look in greater depth crip/neurodivergent methodologies, investigating what these can bring to my research, and to (art) praxis.

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<sup>142</sup> Schemarium – in 2023 I was commissioned to make a work and a presentation for project exploring relationships to the city (of Birmingham)([link](#))



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